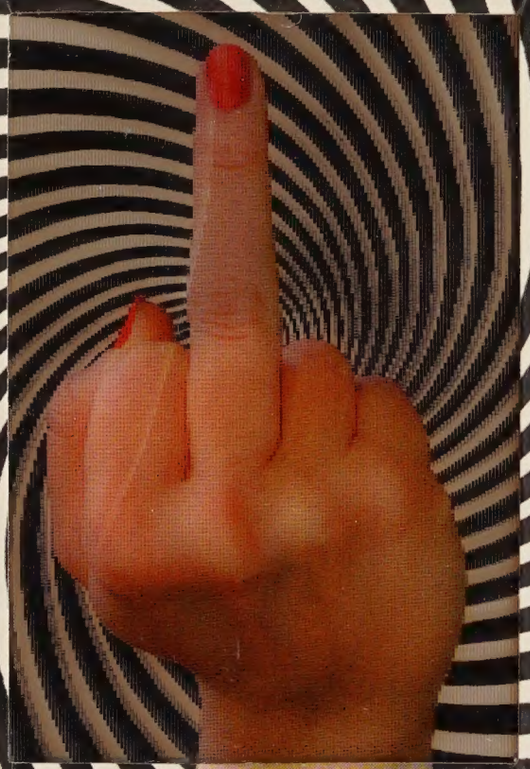
THE FINGER

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO FLIPPING OFF



M.J. LOHEED · MATT PATTERSON · EDDIE SCHMIDT

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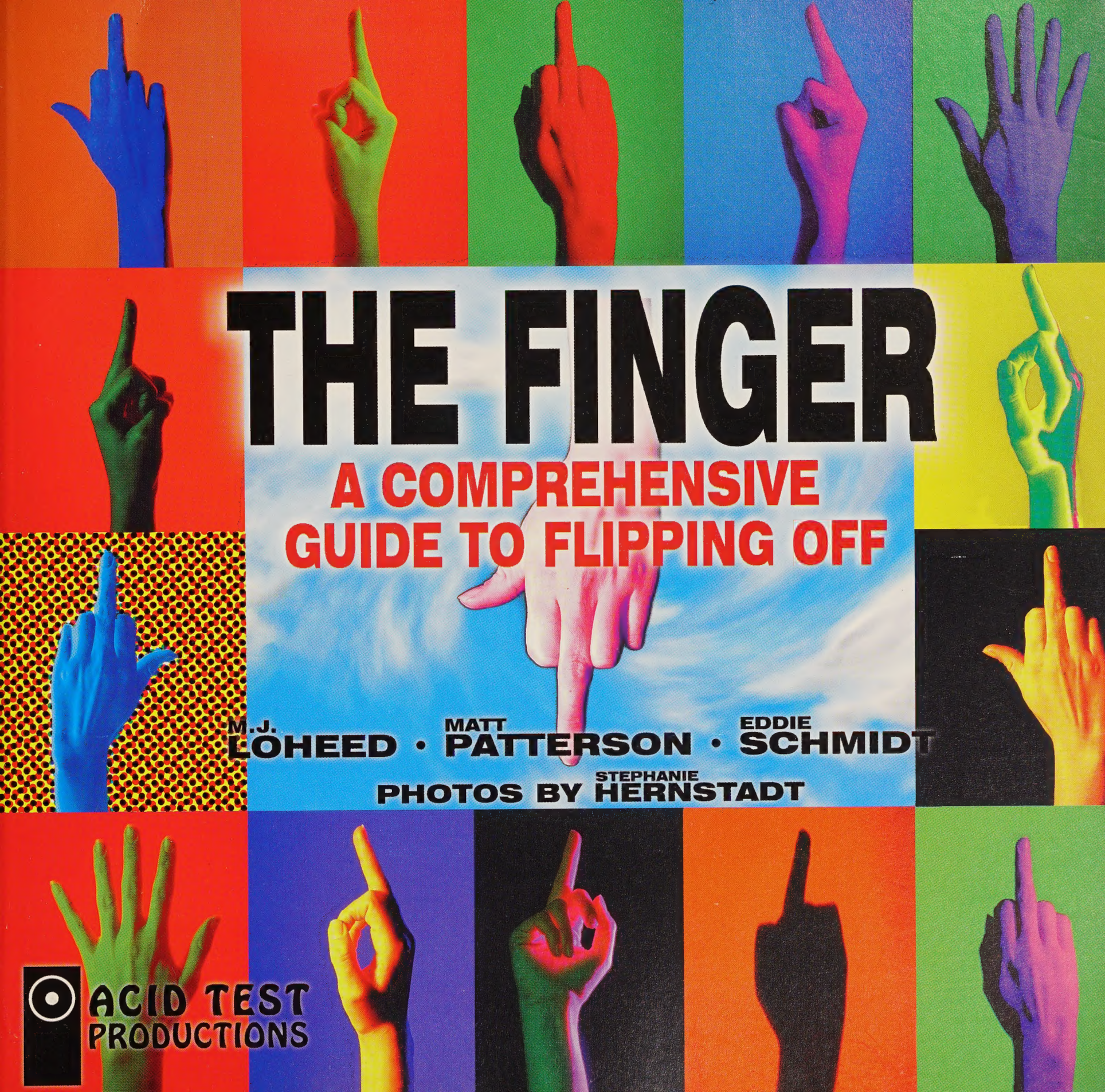
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M.J. LOHEED · MATT PATTERSON · EDDIE SCHMIDT
PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE HERNSTADT
ACID TEST PRODUCTIONS

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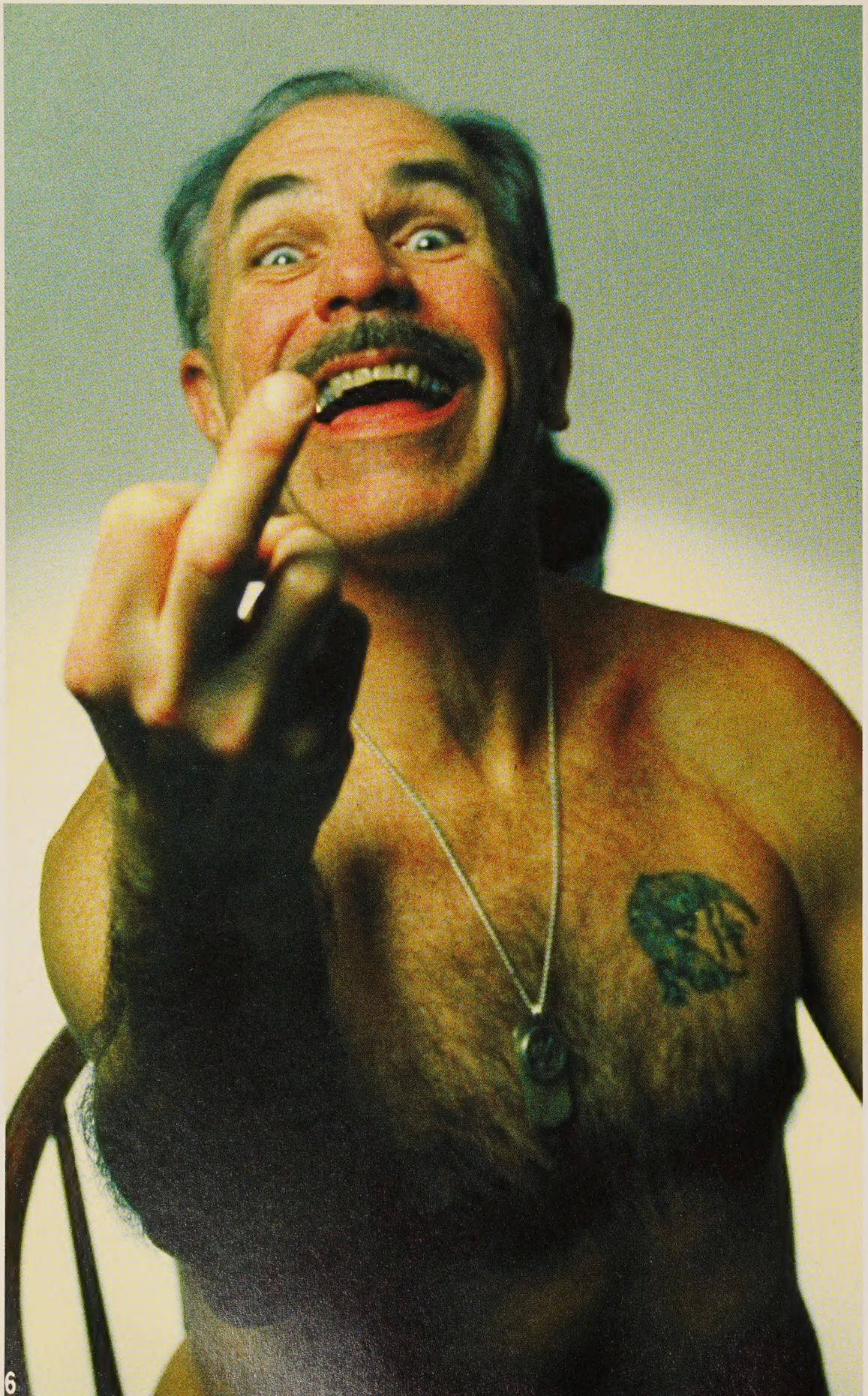
PROOF WE DIDN'T MAKE THIS UP.

WE ARE BORN INTO THIS WORLD SCREAMING, BLOODY AND NAKED.

Yanked from a cozy womb, we begin a long and cranky struggle to make sense of hostile, new surroundings. As infants, even before we can speak, we learn to express our feelings by imitating the gestures of others. These might range from a hand in the mouth saying, **"Get those strained peas outta my face!,"** to a wild arm-flail meaning, **"Put that thermometer up your own ass, lady."** Either way, we're still communicating with gestures.

The word "gesture" comes from the Latin word *gerere*, which means to comport, or show oneself. Since as far back as the first grade, we've all known that one particular gesture would show anger and frustration better than any other: a raised middle finger. The central digit of either hand, firmly upturned and thrust emphatically, never fails to hit the bull's eye. In the wake of political correctness, when thoughts are considered dangerous and words cause internal bleeding and the heartbreak of psoriasis, the finger stands alone.

It's an equal-opportunity offender.



This is a book for anyone who's ever been put-down, stomped on, left out or cast aside. It's for the little guy, the underdog, the wallflower, the schlemiel and the schlamazel. It's a response to the promotion you never got, the stain on your pants and the knife wound in your gut. A rebuttal to every joke at your expense, every scrap of toilet paper stuck to your shoe, and every toupee that's ever blown off your head in a windstorm. Or something like that.

A middle finger conveys your inner turmoil to the outside world. It transforms your hand into a powerful tool—a lightning rod of anger. The finger says: "**I do not agree, up yours, stick it where the sun don't shine**" or, quite eloquently, **"FUCK YOU."** This tiny, once-insignificant digit becomes symbolic of something bigger and more sinister, essentially telling its victim that your hefty set of genitals can kick their ass—or simply that you may kick them in their genitals.

What other insult measures up to the finger? **Dickweed**? **Shithead**? Curse words have lost their punch. They're overused, improperly conjugated, and hard to understand if you have a lisp. In this fragmented world of MTV and STDs, Big Macs and vials of crack, the finger is one signifier that's universally understood across social, linguistic, and economic barriers. Everyone reading this has, at one time, given or gotten the finger. It's the common experience bonding the New Yorker to the Nebraskan, the Hawaiian to the Alaskan. The finger is the hem holding up the pantleg of society.

After billions of years of trial and error, evolution finally produced an intelligent, upright walking mammal. This new being found that his hands could not only fashion instruments to reshape his surroundings, but also to communicate ideas. Man's dexterity unlocked a Pandora's box of unlimited expression, giving birth to the opposable thumb's evil, foul-tempered cousin: **THE BIRD**.

WHAT BETTER WAY TO SAY, "I LOVE YOU?"

But this book is not a *fuck you*. It's a **VALENTINE**. A love letter to rage, a celebration of vulgarity, and a searing look at a simple gesture so common, so ordinary, yet so shunned and misunderstood. This book is everything you wanted to know about the finger, but were afraid to ask. Where did it come from? What does it mean? And why is it so disgusting? Trace the bird's origins in ancient Greece, right up through the modern era, where it penetrates every conceivable aspect of American culture. See rock stars, actors, and politicians flipping off just like you. Enjoy delicious recipes for middle finger food, and learn the many ways to say *eat me* around the globe. This book takes our sacred cows and turns them inside-out, creating a comfortable leather jacket.

Forget God; forget country; this great nation is founded on the principles of the bird. The finger is your ticket to independence. Freedom. Truth, justice, and the pursuit of high-quality footwear at a fraction of retail cost. Join us, and in these pages, learn lots of things your mother would prefer you didn't.

Never before has something so thorough been written about something this ridiculous.

How to Give the Finger

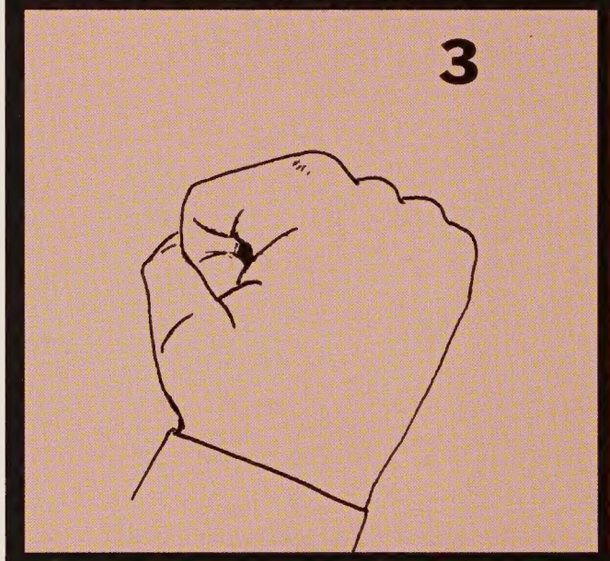
1) Extend either arm at an approximately 90° angle perpendicular to the body.

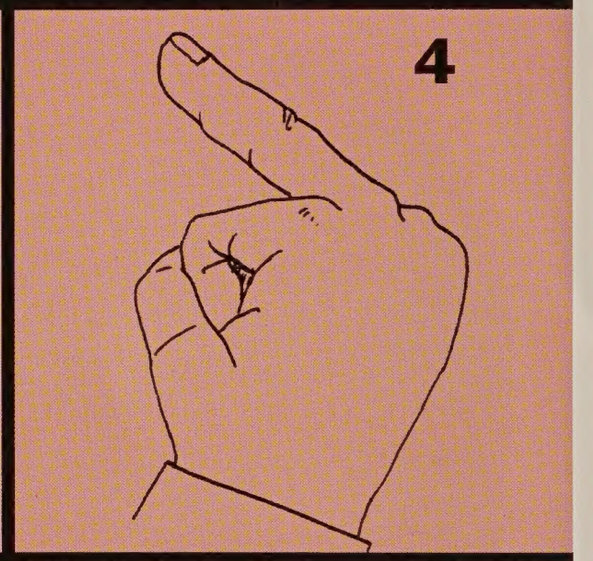
2) Bend arm at the elbow. Position it parallel to the body, forming three sides of a perfect square.

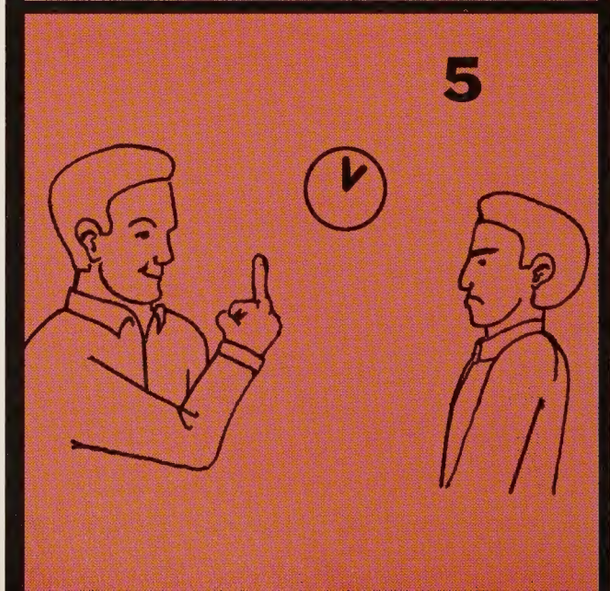
3) Close palm tightly.

4) Fiercely upturn digit between pointer and ring finger.

5) Hold approximately 10 seconds to a minute for emphasis.

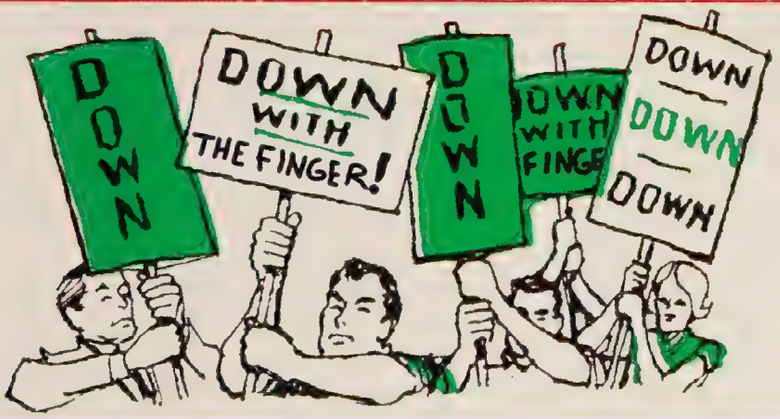






Finger Fact:
The '70s rock-combo, *Badfinger*, had a number one hit with Paul McCartney's *Come 'n Get It.*

for when you're furious, sad, angry, confused, happy, pissed, excited, awed, a
dumfounded, offended, fucked up, crapped on, slept in, cutt off, tired, bleeding
argumentative, blessed, carried away, drunk, farted on, slapped, sued, stung, fl
taken advantage of, backstabbed, frightened, fleeing, jerked off, restless, nause



Flipping someone off may not be sophisticated, dignified, or even very nice, but if you're gonna do it, you'd better do it right.

Be Confident. Hold your finger high. Your finger asserts your authority. Don't wither away from conflict like a vegetarian from a spare rib.

Be Fast. Timing is everything. Hesitate and you're a comic without a punchline; a plumber without a wrench; a president without an intern.

Be Unforgiving. The finger pays no heed and has no regrets. It doesn't care if you cry, scream, or invoke your dead grandmother, may she rest in peace. Show no mercy—the weak shall perish.

The next time you're in traffic, on the beach, or at the opera, and someone's pushing your emotional envelope, take a deep breath. Arch your shoulders, stick out your chest, and follow these steps like a fat guy on a fad diet.

BE STRONG. BE PROUD. AND FLIP. REMEMBER: YOU ARE THE MASTER OF YOUR OWN BIRD.

THE HISTORY OF THE FINGER

is the HISTORY OF MAN

fin•ger

n. 1. One of the five digits of the hand, esp. one other than the thumb. 2. The part of a glove designed to cover a finger. 3. Something, such as an oblong peninsula, that resembles a digit of the hand. 4. The length or width of a finger. 5. A degree of participation; a share. 6. An obscene gesture of defiance or derision made by pointing or jabbing the middle finger upward. Often used with the word *the*.

—The American Heritage College Dic•tion•ar•y

There it is: number 6. Last on the list. **Fuck** has a whole entry in the F section, but all THE FINGER gets is a final footnote in a crappy entry about fingers in general. Although this insult has withstood the test of time better than any other obscenity, no one ever seems to give it much respect.

For example: in 1997, absurdly powerful film director James Cameron came under fire for including the finger in his historical disaster film, *Titanic*. Cameron's heroine, a respectable lady of 1912, flips a quick bird to her fiancee's henchman as she escapes from his clutches in an elevator. Critics assumed the finger's appearance was a historical inaccuracy, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Whether a society lady such as *Titanic*'s Rose would have raised her middle finger so casually is arguable, but the historical precedents of the gesture date back thousands of years. Since gestures often remain part of unwritten history, and this particular gesture has been considered obscene for so long, it's likely that very little of polite society wanted to catalog it. However, the authors of this book harbor no illusions of being polite, and hereby set the record straight.

PRE-HISTORY OF THE FINGER

If we are to believe scientists, the finger predates even written history. According to anthropologists, "THE BIRD" is closely related to penile-aggressive behaviors found in other primates. Many species of monkey sit with their legs wide apart and scare other monkeys by pointing a colorful erect penis at them. (Incidentally, this will also scare people.) Male primates also establish dominance over others by mounting them and simulating sex. They seem to be saying: "**I'm the master monkey here, pal, and can screw whoever I want!**" This is by no means a sexist, one-sided gesture. Female dominants thrust their pelvises into other females, and even weaker males.

Since aggression is still a part of human behavior, and pulling down your pants in public is highly taboo, the need for a penile proxy arose. Hence the finger: a phallic equalizer, giving both men and women a quick thrusting penis that can be summoned on a moment's notice to combat a potential threat. Why the middle one? It's the longest and most violating of fingers. Just look at the thing: It's a **monster**.

...a wicked man goes about with crooked speech, winks with his eyes, scrapes with his feet, points with his finger, with perverted heart devises evil... Proverbs 6:12-14

The Ancient World

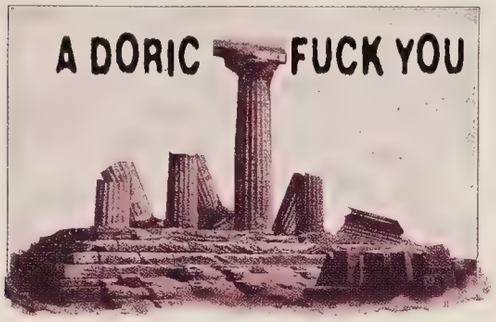
The first concrete evidence of an insulting middle finger appears in ancient Greece, where the finger's meaning was roughly the same as it is today: FUCK YOU, but in Greek. The earliest literary reference to the ancient bird appears in a joke in Aristophanes' play ***The Clouds***, first produced in 423B.C. Aristophanes characterized Socrates as the personification of atheism, scientific inquiry, new morality, and rhetoric. Think of how people perceive lawyers today and you'll get the idea.

Socrates: ...Polite society will accept you if you can discriminate, say, between the martial anapest and common dactylic—sometimes vulgarly called "finger-rhythm."
Strepsiades: Finger-rhythm? I know that.
Socrates: Define it then.
Strepsiades: [Extending his middle finger in an obscene gesture]: Why it's tapping time with this finger. Of course, when I was a boy [raising his phallus to the ready], I used to make rhythm with this one.

Embittered by the play's poor response (it came in last in an Athenian play-writing contest), Aristophanes began rewriting it. He even changed this joke to a reference about feet, since the greek word *dactyl* is interchangeable for a foot or finger. While Aristophanes never staged another production with the original joke again, his pioneering vulgarity paved the way for **the David Mamets of tomorrow**.

Finger references continue to pop up in other volumes of Greek literature. In Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Diogenes Laertius described a historical meeting between another, entirely unrelated, Diogenes and a famous orator named Demosthenes. According to the book, Diogenes once found Demosthenes lunching at an inn. When some strangers asked to see Demosthenes, Diogenes stretched out his middle finger and said, "There goes the demagogue of Athens." Later in the book, Diogenes revealed his philosophy of fingers: "...if you go along with your middle finger stretched out, someone will

think you mad, but, if it's the little finger he will not think so." Nowadays, pointing with the little finger makes people think you're just pretentious.



Proving that the Roman predilection for stealing Greek culture didn't stop at the door of the Pantheon, the finger soon turned up there. Romans used it as a symbol of anal intercourse meant to threaten and violate its victim.

Martial, a poet from the first century A.D., told the story of Marcianus, a healthy old codger who extended a *digitus impudicus* to the local doctors he never needed. Another ancient scribe, Persius, described a ritual in his *Satires* where old women used "obscene fingers" to wipe spit on the brows of children, warding off the evil eye. Persius also wrote of a man so stupid, he couldn't give the finger correctly. Apparently, the need for this book dates back for millennia.

According to the ancient biographer Suetonius, Augustus Caesar did not take the *digitus obscenusus* lightly. Once, during a Roman theater performance, a well-connected man in the audience began to hiss. Pylades, an actor in the play, silenced this man with a wiggle of his middle finger. When word got back to Augustus, he was not amused. Noted for his leniency, the Emperor didn't throw Pylades to the lions but merely banished him from Italy. Still, seclusion would have been tough for the ancient actor. If the city's plays were dull, Mediterranean regional theater must have been worse than a high school production of ***Bye, Bye, Birdie.***

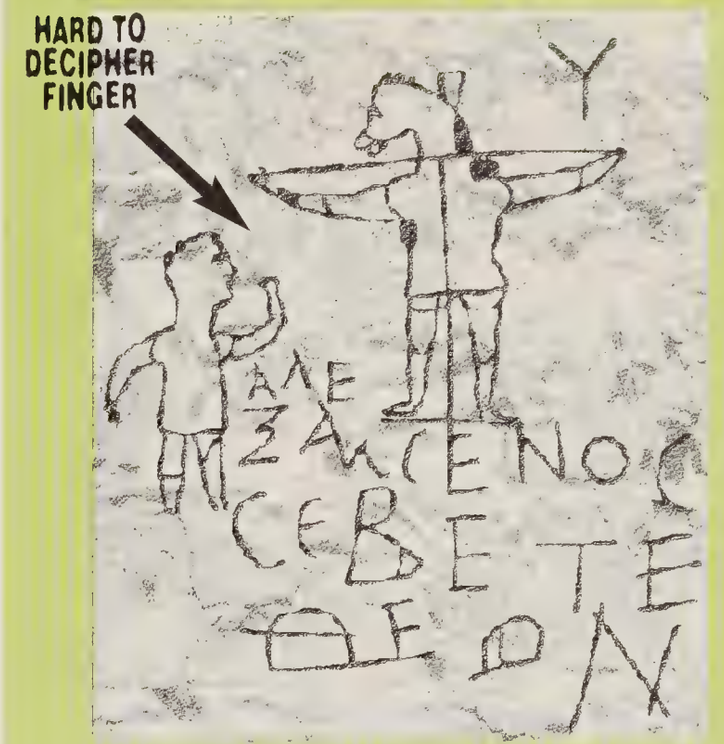
ROMANCE LANGUAGE

digitus impudicus (impudent finger)
digitus infimus (infamous finger)
digitus obscenusus (obscene finger)
digito famosus (finger of fame)
digito destinare (finger of destiny)
digito petulans (wanton finger)
digito improbum (wicked finger)
digito lascivus (lacivious finger)

ANCIENT ROMAN NAMES FOR THE DIRTY MIDDLE DIGIT

While Augustus Caesar's disgust with the middle finger may seem surprising today, it wouldn't have been at the time. The finger was an extremely strong insult, and has only become socially tolerable in recent times. As John Bulwer, a physician working with the deaf, noted in his 1644 book *Chirologia: of the Naturall Language of the Hand*, many

Ancient Graffiti



s graffiti an act of vandalism, or art? The debate is probably older than this drawing, found on a wall at the Imperial College in Rome. It dates from around 300 A.D. The "artist," most likely a student at the school, drew a man with a donkey's head hung on a cross. Another figure extends what appears to be a middle finger at the crucified man-beast. The Latin inscription reads, "*Alexamenos worshipping his god.*" Was a pagan making fun of a Christian comrade? The **Vatican** doesn't think so. They claim the donkey ears were a sign of royalty and wisdom at the time the drawing was made. So little"Alexander" isn't flipping Jesus off, but gesturing reverentially. To the Vatican, this is religious art. To the school janitor, it was a nuisance he never bothered to clean up.

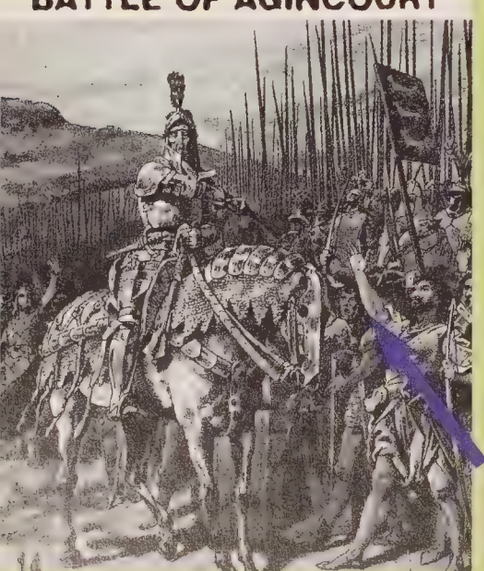
FINGER MYTH

The Battle of Agincourt

October 24, 1415

According to legend, during the **Battle of Agincourt**, the French taunted English bowmen by threatening to cut off their middle fingers. The hypothesis behind this story is that the English longbow, which was made from the yew tree, would have been impossible to draw without the aid of the strongest finger. When the English won the battle, they allegedly waved their middle fingers at the defeated French, taunting, "We can still pluck yew!" Some even believe that the words **pluck yew** transmogrified through the years into **Fuck you**. Others maintain that the English gesture was actually their backwards "V" sign, since you need both fingers to pull the draw string.

Unfortunately for proponents of this convenient story, the battle of Agincourt is one of the better documented battles in European history. While there was a story circulating among the English ranks that the French had threatened to cut all of their fingers off, there is no account of this being anything more than a rumor. Nor are there any solid accounts that either the middle finger gesture or the British backwards "V" were used at the battle, by either side, for any reason. If the gesture was used during the battle, it was probably because soldiers were a surly lot, and it had been around for centuries. It seems the survival of this tale owes its debt to folklore masquerading as fact.



note lack of missing fingers

ancients warned against using it for any reason. They felt the finger was not only deeply insulting, but lowered the stature of anyone who flashed it. Bulwer concluded that the *convicium facio* (meaning, *I provoke an argument*), is a "natural expression of scorn and contempt."

Of course, that didn't prevent some ancients from indulging. Roman Emperor Caligula, a **renowned pervert**, frequently employed the power of the finger to embarrass his subjects. He would offer his middle finger to be kissed instead of his hand (as if sleeping with his own mother and horse weren't offensive enough). Caligula particularly enjoyed torturing a palace guard named Cassius with this humiliation, because Caligula thought the guard was too effeminate. But Cassius' sword was the first to strike Caligula down during his assassination. And how feminine is that?

The Middle Ages

Soon the barbarians came, Rome fell, and the dark ages settled comfortably over Europe. During this time, the finger seemed to vanish from written records. Other naughty gestures, such as **the fig**, which simulates a penis poking through the labia, took up the slack, and even appeared in the work of William Shakespeare. But the bird seemed to have flown the coop.

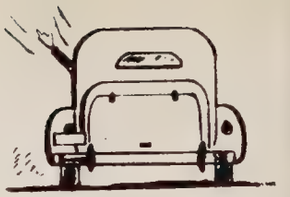
19th century anthropologist Carl Sittl attributed the finger's disappearance to the thriving power and prudish attitudes of the Catholic Church. During the Middle Ages, they considered the middle finger symbolic of truth and justice, and did not want it associated with anything *dirty*. Other academics debunk Sittl's theory, since the finger survived the Middle Ages, and is, in fact, alive and well and even practiced by many modern Catholics. Besides, if the church is against phallic symbols, **what's up with the Pope's hat?**

The finger probably didn't come over on the Mayflower, but it was only a matter of time before the bird emigrated to America. What better place to fester than the world's first melting pot where the finger's clarity speaks a Babel of tongues? When exactly it first appeared in the U.S. is uncertain, but the first known flip-off in photographic history happened here.

A GUY NAMED "OLD HOSS" MAKES HISTORY

APRIL 29, 1886: It was opening day of the new baseball season, and the **Boston Beaneaters** had gathered for a team picture. If you look carefully in the upper left corner you'll see Hall of Famer **Charles "Old Hoss" Radbourn** resting his ***digitus erectus*** on the shoulder of the teammate in front of him. This was star pitcher Radbourn's first day with his new team. In addition to being one of the last major leaguers to pitch underhanded, "Old Hoss" is the first professional athlete to make being an asshole part of the game.

The Finger of Industry



While slow to take flight during the repressive Victorian era, the finger emerged from the 20th century as the foremost hand gesture used by every American Joe and Jane. Like any good underdog, this bird weathered the storm of oppression and came out of the rain shaking its wet stinky feathers on everyone.

But what fueled the bird's return? The horrors of modern war? The increase of civil rights? Most likely, it was the mass production of the automobile. Henry Ford's Tin Lizzy created what is today the bird's favorite habitat: the open road. With increased range and exposure, and the safety of enclosed steel and glass, the finger became a ubiquitous part of American life.

Whatever the reason, the 20th Century marked a turning point in the finger's evolution. No longer was it considered an abomination, or an act to be punished. An informal survey of gestures conducted by William S. King, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley in 1949, noted that "*The most widely known symbol observed is the so-called 'finger.'... It is a gesture of contempt, but appears to be used by intimates in a joking manner.*"

Some people no doubt regard this laissez-faire attitude as the exact point at which manners **disappeared from the Earth**. Others believe the finger's popularity marked a new era of openness and free expression, and that its detractors are simply an **old pile of decaying fecal matter**.

Whatever your opinion, by the 1960s, the finger was accepted by more establishments than Visa, Master Card, or American Express combined. When a flipped bird led to Dennis Hopper & Peter Fonda's brutal deaths in the 1969 film, *Easy Rider*, the finger found itself the martyred symbol of a rebellious young generation.

ABBIE HOFFMAN WITH WILLIAM KUNSTLER, DAVE DEILINGER & JERRY RUBIN

Counterculture icon **Abbie Hoffman**, along with his **Yippies** (short for Youth International Party), were well-known for their social and political pranks. They once ran a pig for President, attempted to "levitate" the Pentagon, and even dumped 300 one dollar bills on the New York Stock Exchange's trading floor just to watch the economic backbone of America scramble for cash. But on March 22nd, 1969, in front of the New York Federal courthouse, **Hoffman raised his middle finger in response to charges of conspiracy** for organizing demonstrations at the 1968 Chicago Democratic Convention. His defiant gesture proved an old standby can speak for even the most revolutionary of thinkers. You can **Steal His Book**, but you can't **steal his digit**.

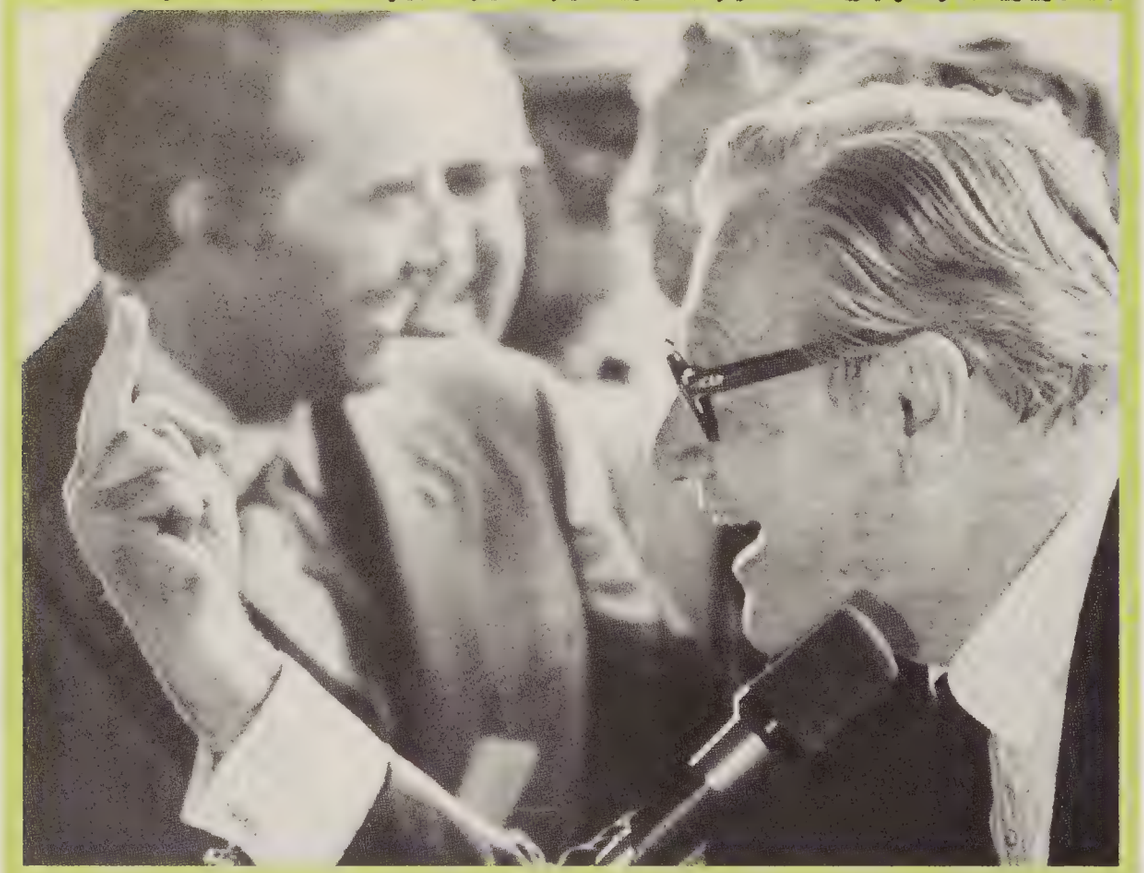
NAVY CREW FLIPS OFF COMMUNISM!

In 1968 the finger played an important, if bizarre, role in cold-war politics. On the night of January 23, the **U.S.S. Pueblo**, a small naval intelligence ship, was captured off the coast of North Korea. Her crew of 73 sailors were held captive for eleven months by the North Korean People's Army while the U.S. and Korea argued whether the ship had been gathering military intelligence. During this time, the Koreans controlled the crew's contact with the outside world, forcing them to write pro-communist letters filled with confessions of espionage. In addition to beatings and other poor treatment, the Americans were subjected to a barrage of Korean propaganda films. One of these films featured footage of the World Cup soccer tournament. During the film, **an English fan visibly flips the bird to the oblivious Korean soccer team**. Realizing their captors didn't understand this insult, the Pueblo's crew started using the finger as the one freedom they still had. For a time, the Korean guards even believed their explanation that it was a "Hawaiian good luck sign."

Captured off the coast of North Korea in 1968, these Navy sailors were held captive for 11 months by the People's Army. In the face of Communist indoctrination, the crew continually flipped the bird, telling the Koreans it was a "Hawaiian good luck sign."

Eventually, some of the prisoners were allowed to take a group photograph, and four brave men decided to share their joke with the folks back home. When the photos went public, The U.S. media erupted, since they proved that the propaganda in the crew's handwritten letters were not their true sentiments. Unfortunately, due to the stateside publicity, the Koreans figured out that the finger wasn't really a hula dance, and brutally beat the Americans. But the damage was done: the finger sent a coded message that godless communism couldn't control wily, red-blooded Americans who spoke softly, and carried big flesh-sticks.

VICE PRESIDENT NELSON ROCKEFELLER



Nelson Rockefeller lets his finger do the talking to protesters at a 1976 rally for Senator Bob Dole (in background). Note Dole is not giving anyone the finger, but may have menaced protesting hippies with his firmly grasped pen.

200 years after the U.S. declared independence from the British Empire, the finger celebrated America's bicentennial with some truly amazing feats. At the State University of New York at Binghampton, during a campaign stop in support of Senator Bob Dole, **Vice President Nelson Rockefeller** embraced the **power of his middle pundit**. After Nixon and Agnew handed the presidential office over to Gerald Ford, the country inconveniently ran out of Vice Presidents. The aging and affluent Rockefeller was filling the role until the 1976 election, but aides worried that he was starting to crack under the pressure.

When Rockefeller introduced Dole as a war hero who was injured protecting the rights of U.S. countrymen, anti-war protesters started chanting and flipping him the bird. Rocky grinned and simply flipped it right back. The next day, his infamous finger wound up in newspapers coast-to-coast. When Dole was asked why he didn't join in the festivities, he reminded the press, "**I have trouble with my right arm.**"

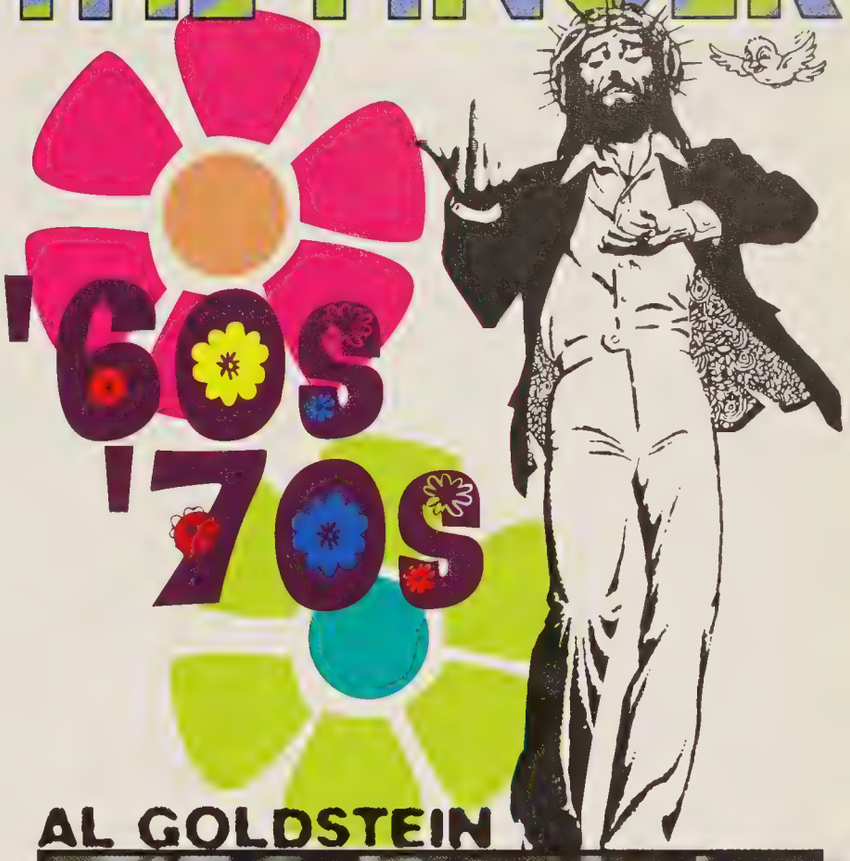
Considering the Vice President of the United States was able to flip off with impunity, it is no surprise that only a few months later, an appellate court in Connecticut ruled that the finger was not legally obscene, thus releasing the bird from its gilded cage.

At the dawn of a new millennium, we can rest assured that this once endangered bird is thriving. Today the finger enjoys a predator free environment and appears in feature films, books, schoolyards, and most recently, television. Instead of shunning this "obscene" gesture, we should treasure its rich cultural heritage. **We are living in the Golden Age of The Finger.** Get used to it.

FINGER FACT:

Astronomer **Galileo's** meticulously preserved middle finger can be seen today in Italy's **Museo di Storia del Scienza**. The famous astronomer's appendage was plucked from his dead body by a souvenir-seeking Anton Francesco Gori in 1737. Gori detached this prize while moving the body from an undignified storage closet to a nearby chapel. Isn't it fitting that Galileo is still giving "the finger" to all those who doubted that the sun was the center of the solar system?

35 YEARS OF THE FINGER



1964, October 18: After a series of successful appearances on the **Ed Sullivan Show**, **Jackie Mason** blows it by giving the bird to Sullivan and the audience. Sullivan promptly cancels Mason's contract for 6 appearances, effectively ruining his career for over a decade. Mason later says, "I didn't even know what the gesture meant. Six months before I had been a rabbi. I was completely naive about those things."

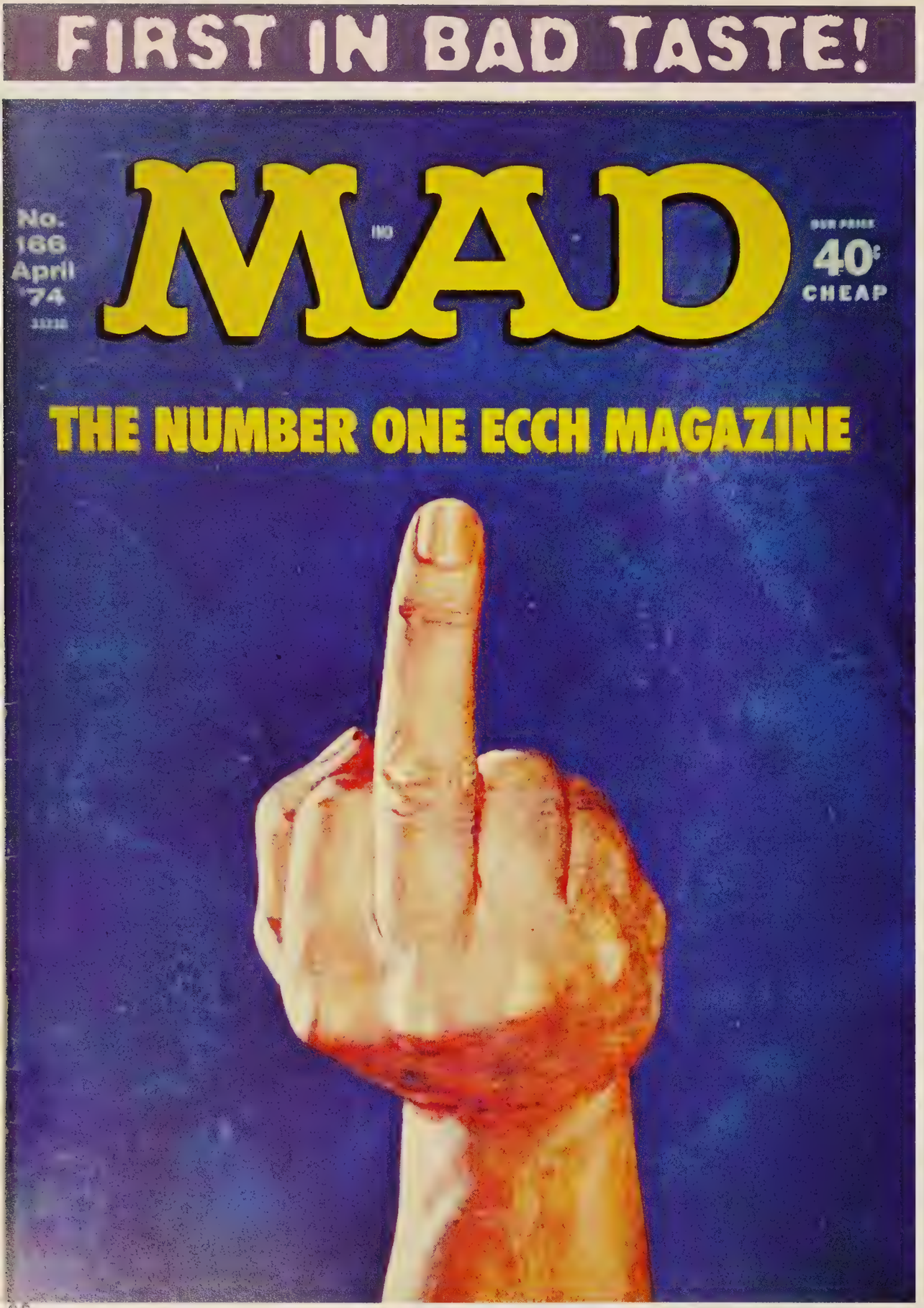
1967, Oct. 20: LIFE magazine runs a cover photo of American **POW Paul Galanti** in **Vietnam**. Galanti's picture was taken by an East German crew and shows him sitting in his cell with both middle fingers extended. Galanti wanted to communicate that he was not voluntarily taking part in the propaganda photo. Unfortunately, LIFE opts to airbrush out Galanti's fingers. He remains in captivity for another six years.

1967: Moby Grape releases its self-titled first album with **Don Stevenson** giving the finger on the cover. Columbia recalls the album, and all further pressings have the finger airbrushed out.

1972, August: The **Miami Dolphins' Larry Csonka** slips a sneaky finger onto the cover of **Sports Illustrated**.

1976: The **Midnight Blue** cable TV show premieres in Manhattan. Host **Al Goldstein**, notorious publisher of **Screw Magazine**, begins a regular feature where he flips the bird to any anything he doesn't like—be it an ex-wife, divorce lawyer, or deli.

1979: ***The Brethren***, a book about life in the **Supreme Court**, contains a fascinating story. After one verdict, **Justice Brennan** counted out each of the justices' votes on his fingers, according to the book's author, a court clerk. Brennan signified the deciding vote, **Chief Justice Burger's**, with his middle finger—demonstrating his lofty opinion of the Chief Justice.



In **April 1974**, the visionary editors of ***MAD* Magazine** released their latest issue without the familiar face of Alfred E. Neuman on the cover. In his freckled place was a disembodied hand, bearing an upward middle finger and the subtitle, **The Number One Ecch Magazine.**

How did this prominent pointer get on the cover? During an editorial meeting, editor Nick Meglin simply held his finger aloft and said, **"*MAD*–Always Number One in Good Taste!"**–and off they went. But at the last minute, another editor changed the headline to the more enigmatic, "Ecch", diluting the joke.

In the end, it hardly mattered what it said. Most distributors refused to even handle the issue, and few newsstands outside the big cities would display it. *MAD*'s editors were deluged with hundreds of complaints from the people who could find it. Publisher William M. Gaines decided to respond with a personal apology letter to each complaint. Even though *MAD*'s editors say they would never make another cover like it, today that same issue is a collector's item.

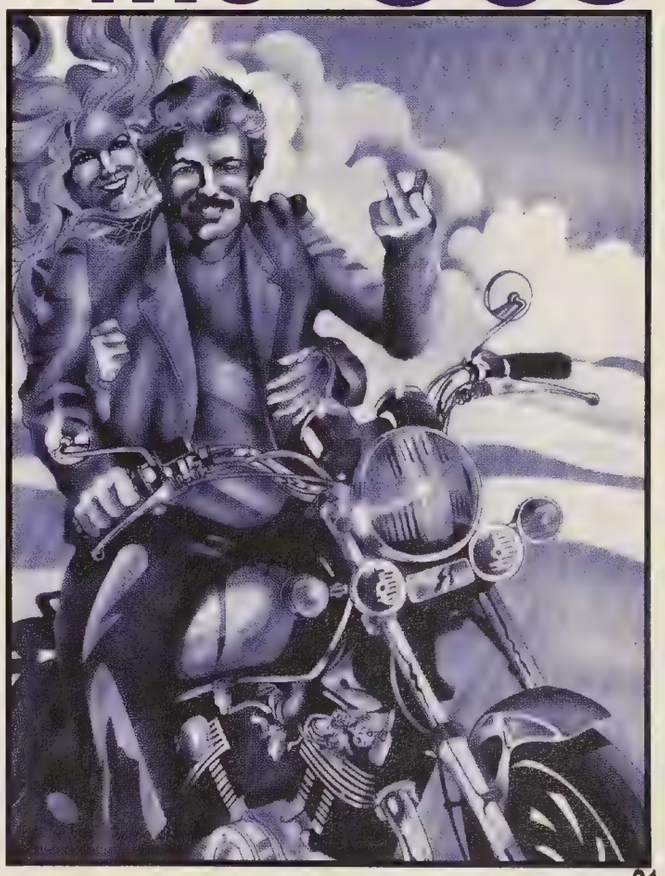
the '80s

1980: A contractor is arrested in **Hammond, Louisiana** after painting a supermarket wall with a 30-foot picture of **Mickey Mouse** making an obscene gesture at **Iran**. The dialogue balloon coming out of Mickey's mouth says, "***We're fed up. Hey, Iran!***" Since the store had asked the contractor to paint the wall yellow, they might have had good reason to sign the complaint which led to the arrest.

1982, August: Bad boy **Pierre Trudeau**, **Prime Minister of Canada**, gives the finger to a crowd of protesters outside his train car in Salmon Arm, British Columbia. In October, Trudeau does it again, but this time to a journalist in Quebec. One week later, the finger-happy politician is greeted by the **International Woodworkers of America** who rise to their feet to give Trudeau their own little woodies, in recognition of his 63rd birthday.

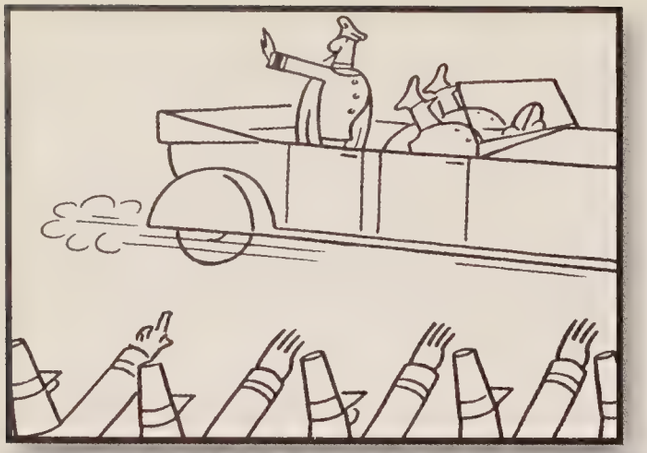
1983: Venezuela, Posters in opposition to Mr. Luis Herrera Campins, the incumbent candidate for president, depict a woman raising her middle finger in the air to speak her mind about the present government.

1984: Biddeford High School, Maine. A **social studies teacher** nearly loses his job for giving the finger in the school's yearbook. His lawyer claims that the finger, pictured against the globe in his classroom, was unintentional and that, "***It takes a dirty mind to see any dirtiness in this.***"



1988: Malcolm Forbes, publisher of **Forbes Magazine**, appears on the cover of the May issue of **Outlaw Biker** apparently giving the finger with a skull and crossbones ring on it. Unfortunately, inquiries prove the photo was doctored from another photo of Forbes and **Elizabeth Taylor** exchanging rings.

1989, September 16: Washington D.C. Mayor, **Marion Barry,** flips a bird in response to jeering from constituents attending a street fair. Barry apologized later and said he only made the gesture because the **hecklers made rude remarks about his mother and wife**. One observer commented, "That wasn't an obscene gesture; that was a campaign promise." No doubt Barry's bad mood continued when he was arrested on cocaine possession charges in 1990.



1992, September: A man is arrested after giving the finger to **President Bush**. He files suit against the police officer who arrested him, saying the police had violated his First Amendment rights. The police say the man was arrested not for his finger, but for crossing a police line set up to keep the public back from the president's motorcade.

1992, December 11: A **San Diego** couple is awarded **$300,000** in damages when the San Diego Superior Court decides their civil rights were violated. The couple were having a backyard barbecue when a police helicopter pointed its searchlight at them. Annoyed, the couple flashed the finger at the helicopter. Within minutes their house was raided by the San Diego Police.

1994: "***What's the deal with a substitute phallus?***" The finger hits **Seinfeld** when George believes everyone is flipping him the bird in ***The Pledge Drive*** (episode 85; 10/6/94). This episode, like many others, causes people to remark that real-life situations are "*just like that episode of '**Seinfeld**'!*"

1995: Arizona death row inmate **Jimmie Wayne Jeffers** screams obscenities and extends his middle finger while being executed for killing his ex-girlfriend with an overdose of heroin in 1976. Jeffers' **middle finger was still extended** when he died.

1996, March: Pro-gun Simi Valley, CA councilwoman **Sandi Webb** gives the finger to U.S. Senator **Diane Feinstein** in response to the senator's harsh criticism of a proposal to repeal the assault weapons ban. Later, Feinstein accepts Webb's apology, saying "I've been flipped off by bigger birds than that."

1998: KBPI, a Denver FM radio station takes out an ad in the **Press-Gazette** which says that the Denver **Broncos are #1**. If properly folded the two hands pictured with their indexes outstretched come together to form a middle finger.

1998: Author **Elizabeth Wurtzel** appears on the cover of her newest book, ***Bitch***, with an upraised middle finger standing in for the '**i**' in the title. ***Entertainment Weekly*** calls the finger "***trendy.***" We agree.

Life Magazine, July 1983: photographer Mary Ellen Mark captures this photo of a homeless, 16 year old runaway on the streets of Seattle. His name is Rat, and he's flipping off a businessman who refused to give him any money. Seattle? *hmmm...* Could this businessman possibly be a future software billionaire? Look closely.

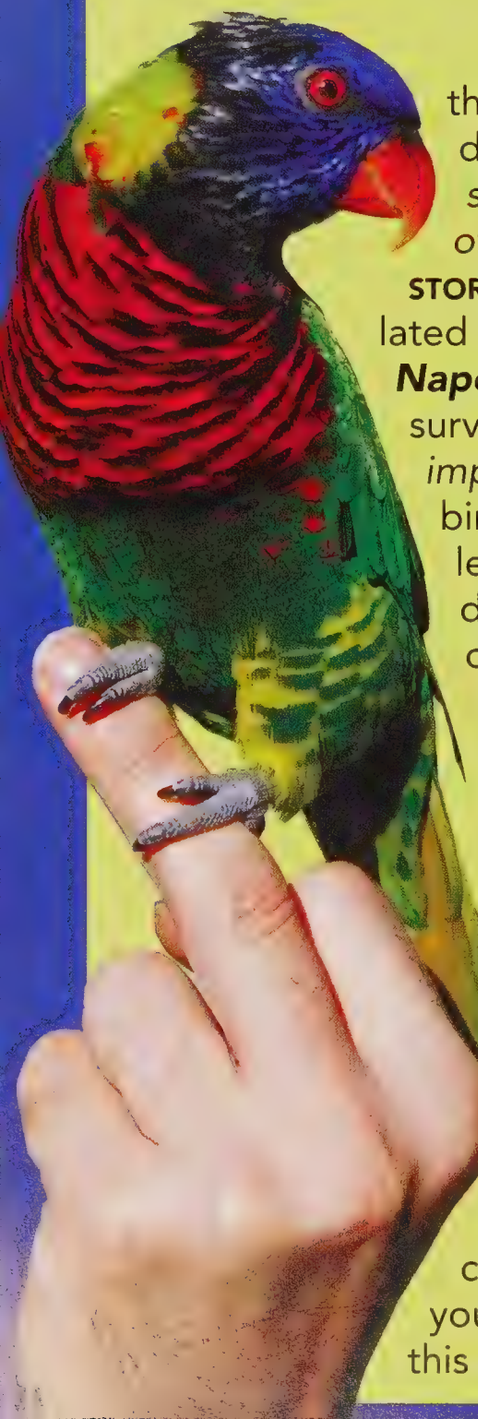
FINGER FACT:
Frank Zappa's children—Moon Unit, Dweezil, Ahmet, and Diva—used to own a feathered pet which Frank cleverly named *Bird Reynolds*.

MYSTERY!

HOW DID THE FINGER

Looking at your middle finger, you may wonder how it earned its nickname, **"THE BIRD."** One of the great mysteries of the universe, this question has puzzled scientists for decades. No doubt they'll cure herpes before we get a straight answer to this one, but here are a few theories:

"THE BIRD" is "THE STORK"

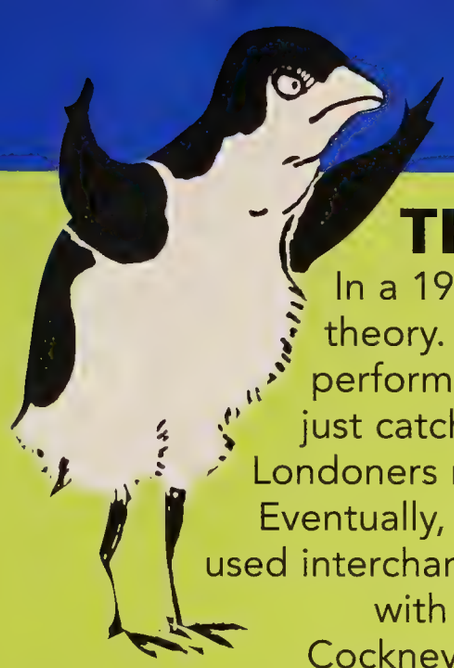


The ancient Roman God **Janus** had a face on both the front and back of his head. Roman scribe Persius, described Janus as the only god *"...whom no needling stork can sneak up on, whom no hand can make fun of..."*; referring to a Roman gesture called **"THE SIGN OF THE STORK."** 19th century Italian ethnographer Antonio de Jorio speculated in his book, ***La Mimica Degli Antichi Investigata Nel Gestire Napoletano*** (which sounds more like a take-out menu than a scientific survey), that this stork-sign was another synonym for *digitus impudicus*, i.e. the finger. If you look at your hand as it forms "the bird," it bears a resemblance to the head and bill of a stork—at least under the influence of mind-bending psychedelics. If de Jorio is right, the finger's association with birds is almost as old as the gesture itself.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Those who believe the finger was deployed at the **Battle of Agincourt**, have a theory that the term "the bird" is derived from the pheasant feather fletchings on the English archer's arrows. If you remember, in this 15th century battle, the French supposedly threatened to cut off the English archers' middle fingers, making it impossible for them to draw their bows. (See page 14.) However, the connection between the middle finger and the feathers on the arrow is tenuous at best, and there's no evidence that anyone called the finger, "the bird"until the 1960s. If you like easy solutions like Prozac or Scientology, this explanation might work for you.

BECOME THE BIRD?



THE BIRD IS... *THE RASPBERRY?*

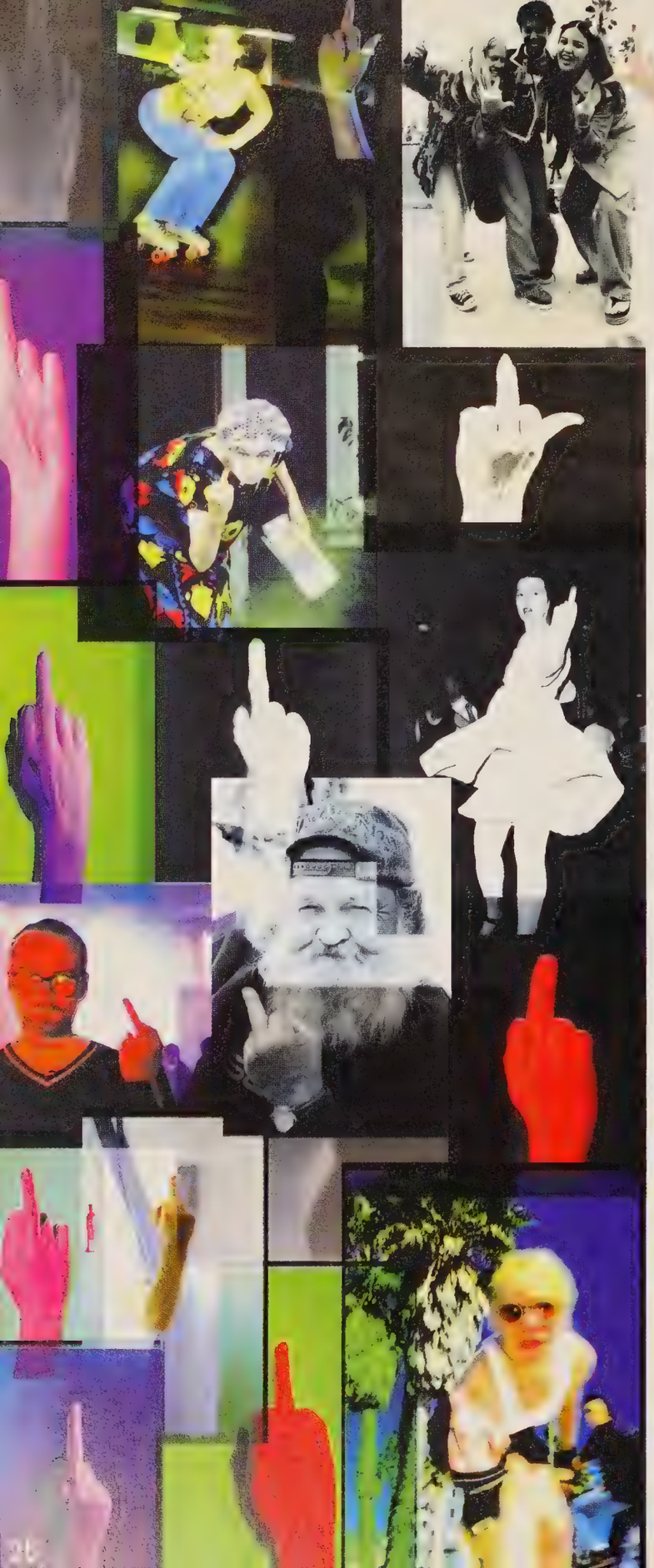
In a 1997 **GQ** magazine article, writer Bruce Anderson proposed a different theory. 19th century London theatergoers expressed their discontent with bad performances by **hissing like angry geese**. Audiences still hiss like that today; just catch the musical version of ***Carrie*** and see for yourself. Back then, Londoners referred to this practice as *to goose*, or *to give the big bird.*

Eventually, Anderson theorizes, the custom moved into the mainstream, and was used interchangeably with **THE RASPBERRY**. The raspberry is a flatulent noise you make with your mouth. But why is it called the "*raspberry*"? The term comes from Cockney rhyming slang for fart. It works like this: take something unspeakable like, "fart" and make a two word rhyme for it—say raspberry tart. Then just use the first word when you mean the rhyme of the second. So **RASPBERRY = FART**. Get it?

Anderson cites Eugene O'Neill's 1922 play ***The Hairy Ape*** as an example of the gesture's use in conjunction with the term "bird": a prisoner urges his fellow inmates to give, "...the boid, fellers...the raspberry!" (*Boid* being New York-speak for bird.) However, since the prisoners are in cells and can't see each other, the character is referring to the farty sound and not the finger, as Anderson theorizes. These days, the raspberry is known only as "the Bronx cheer" and not the bird. So if it *was* used interchangeably, when exactly did it start—and when did it stop?

By 1966 we can be sure THE BIRD was a well-known term for the finger. As Anderson notes, it makes a flyby in navy pilot F.C. Elkins' journal, ***The Heart Of a Man***. "June 12, 1966 ...The Russian tail-gunner ...[gave] one of our F-8 pilots the international one-fingered salute, *the bird.*"

We may never know who first raised their finger up high and called it THE BIRD. For that matter, we may never know how the pyramids were built, if there's a Tooth Fairy, or if William Shatner really wears a hair-piece. If you're truly serious about solving this finger mystery, write to Robert Stack.



FINGER OF 1000 FACES

Only Americans could take a simple insult like the finger and give it an infinite series of spins. Chalk it up to a nation of misplaced ingenuity. The same people who once led the globe in producing cars now head the world in super-sized, musk-scented Pop Tarts. We spend more time and money on games and entertainment than on education, so it's not surprising that our slang expressions are more advanced than any space program. Foreign swears may be more poetic (*may the fleas of a thousand camels infest your armpits!*), but they're long-winded and in another language. When it comes to shit, tit, and dick, nobody does it better than Americans.

In the name of cultural advancement, we've dissected 19 well-known finger variations and grouped them into five categories. Each insult is accompanied by a handy illustration to help out slow learners or recent immigrants. This is by no means a complete list, but any more would be truly scary. If you want 57 varieties, **eat some ketchup**.

FINGER FACT:
In police parlance, to *finger* someone is to name them as a potential suspect.

MOVEMENT

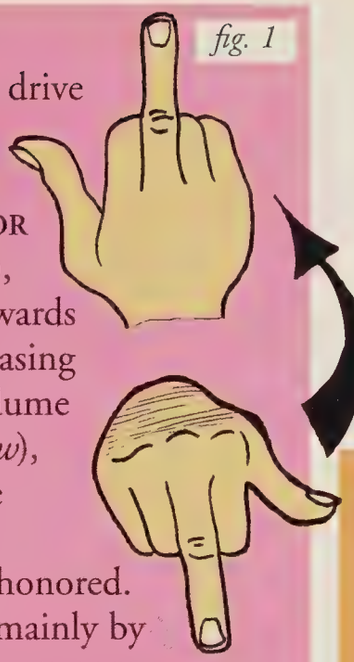


fig. 1

Some of the most powerful fingers drive their messages home simply by using a little extra motion. The popular saying "NOT LOUD ENOUGH FOR YOU? THEN TURN IT UP!" (*figure 1*), features a downturned bird spun upwards to symbolize a volume knob of increasing tension. Like most things at high volume (drum circles, guitars, *Apocalypse Now*), this insult works best if you're a little stoned, or at least sound that way.

Sometimes tradition needs to be honored. Before the automobile, we travelled mainly by horse, so the term "FUCK YOU AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON" (*figure 2*) reminds us of those bygone days. A normal upturned finger, rotated 90 degrees on its side, signifies both the recipient and his or her stallion. By adding the horse to the insult, the user negates the victim's entire place in the space/time continuum. If the horse is fucked too, then the victim is in fact back to square one—shit out of luck, as they say. This variation is a favorite of existentialists everywhere.

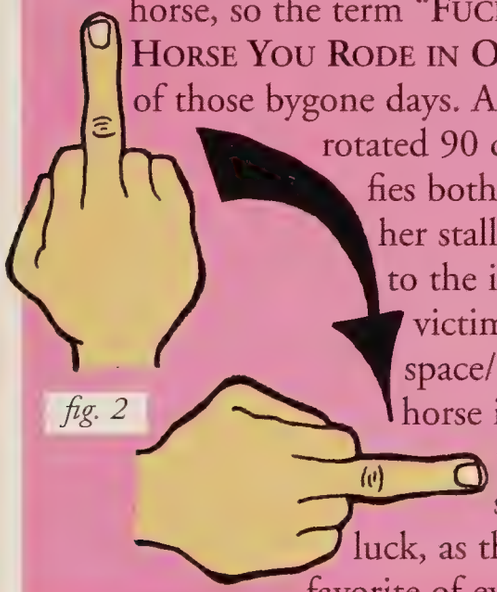


fig. 2

DECEPTION

Once in a while, the urge to finger is there, but the desire to get caught isn't. By combining everyday action with sly deceit, DIGGING FOR GOLD, and GLASSES PUSH-UP (*figures 6 & 7*) guarantee a 100% success rate yet won't land their practitioners in trouble. One part violating gesture and one part personal hygiene makes you the James Bond of assholes.

fig. 7

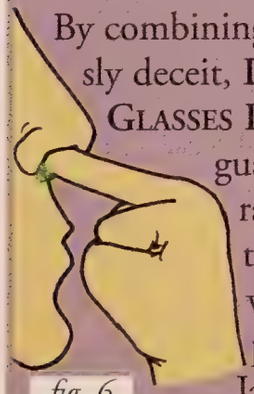
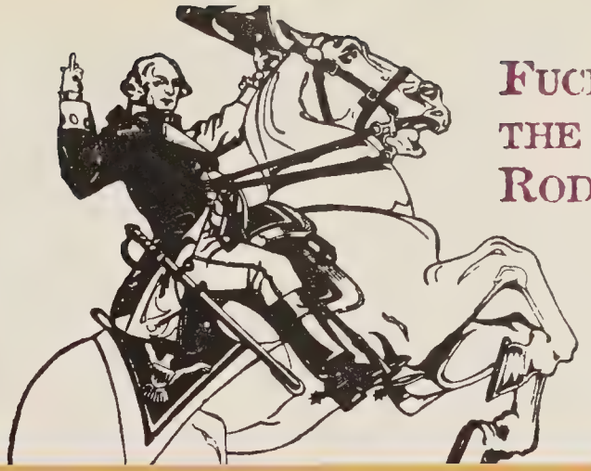


fig. 6



FUCK YOU AND THE HORSE YOU RODE IN ON

MULTIPLICATION

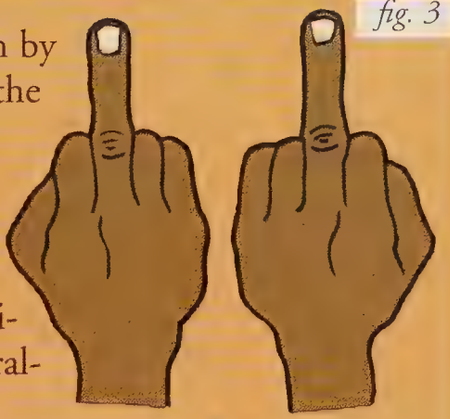


fig. 3

Other variations add punch by exponentially increasing the gesture. The two-handed DOUBLE THE PLEASURE (*figure 3*) doubles your cojones and is perfect for mugshots, school photos, or birthday invitations. The maneuver is generally crass and off-the-cuff, like a drunk pissing on his neighbor's lawn.

fig. 4

Better still is the BOUQUET (*figure 4*)—a handful of digits giving the user five, even ten, angry fingers to foist on an agitator. The boquet disguises its contempt in the benign act of giving someone flowers. The user asks, "what's this?" when thrusting out the whole hand, then answers with, "it's a bouquet of these!" revealing a flowering middle finger.

A rare variation on this theme is 3-D (*figure 5*), whereby the user holds one extended finger (and hand) several inches in front of the second one, creating an optical illusion. You won't even need those stupid, red-and-blue plastic glasses.

fig. 5

fig. 8

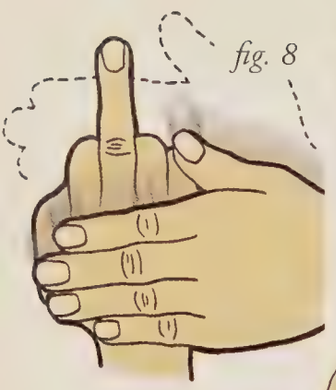


fig. 9

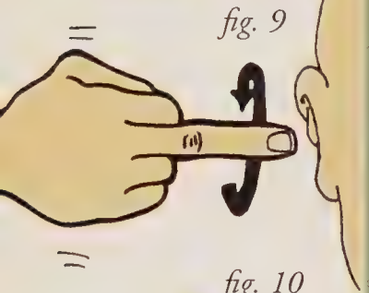


fig. 10

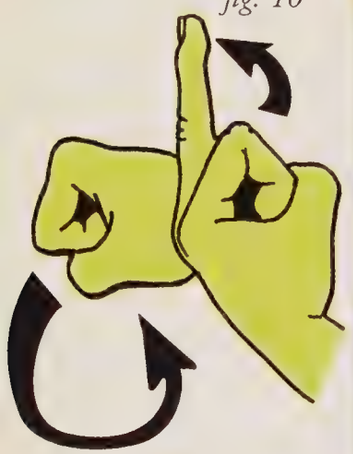


fig. 11

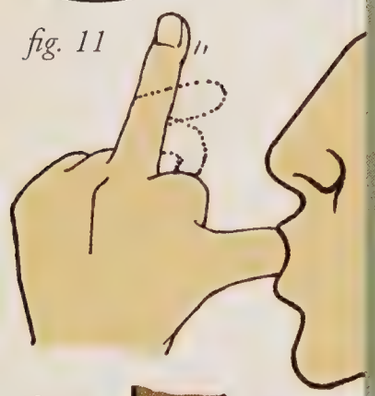
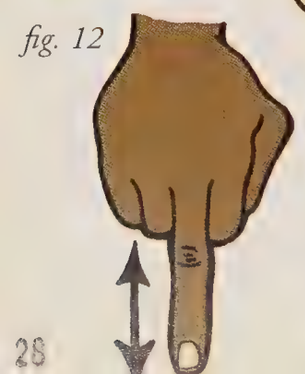


fig. 12



GAMES

It's finger fun for everyone when innocent, childlike games invoke the adult sentiment of reaming somebody up the ass.

For PEEK-A-BOO (*figure 8*), cup a hand around a hidden middle finger and flash intermittently. If so inclined, scream "**hey, fucker! Peek-A-Boo!**" To go Crazy (*figure 9*), twirl a finger around the circumference of the ear in a classic childhood representation of dementia.The two-handed TURNING CRANK (*figure 10*) gives its victim a quick lesson in physics, as one hand "pumps" the middle finger of the other hand upwards, while the BLOW-UP BALLOON (*figure 11*) uses human lung emission to "inflate" a finger balloon. Try doing all of these at once, and people will think you have epilepsy.

The enigmatic GOIN' TO CHINA (*figure 12*), performed by snapping a downturned finger back and forth toward the ground, recalls the good old days when children thought they could dig through the floor to get to the Orient. Unfortunately, the government put a stop to this dangerous practice back in the '50s after 10 year old Billy Hopkins of Madison, WI was held captive by the Red Chinese.

MUTATION

Still other variations alter the insult by using truncated fingers or substitutes. When telling someone to "READ BETWEEN THE LINES" (*figure 13*), hold up the index, middle and fourth fingers and bunch them together. Your helpless victim will have to Sherlock Holmes his own fuck-off.

A mutated version of "read between the lines" is PEEL THE BANANA (*figure 14*), which looks similar, until the user "peels back" the surrounding fingers to reveal the middle one. Hey Mr. Tallyman, tally this banana!

A big hit in the '70s, the declaration, "HERE'S MY FINGER, HERE'S MY THUMB... HERE'S MY PEACE SIGN, MINUS ONE!"(*figure 15*), is invoked simultaenously with the display of digits. This cheesy variant is sure to remind its victims of beer shampoo, Reggie bars, and macrame poodles.

Two potent insults work by deeming their recipient even **LOWER** than the finger itself. The double entendre of SHORTHAND (*figure 16*) says, in essence, "*I don't even have the energy to describe what a piece of crap you are.*" Likewise, when you extend your pinkie and say, "FOR WHEN YOU DON'T CARE ENOUGH TO SEND THE VERY BEST" (*figure 17*), it sends home an old insult in a new, midget-like way.

fig. 13

fig. 14

fig. 15

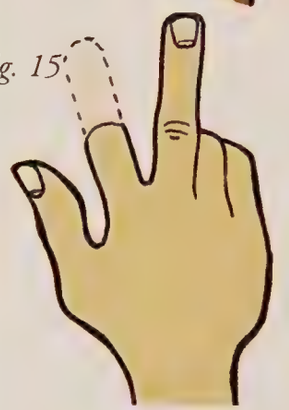


fig. 16

fig. 17

fig. 18

fig. 19

BAD TASTE

Finally, here are the gross, lame, and retarded fingers that don't quite fit in anywhere else.

BLOWJOB (*figure 18*) is performed by inserting the middle finger of either hand inside the mouth and moving it in and out, just like a real blowjob. While vulgar, this autoerotic insult rarely produces an orgasm.

The protruding knuckles of the index and fourth fingers in COCK-AND-BALLS (*figure 19*), transform your hand into a scale model of the human penis. This is one anatomy lesson your enemies will never forget.

ON THE ROAD

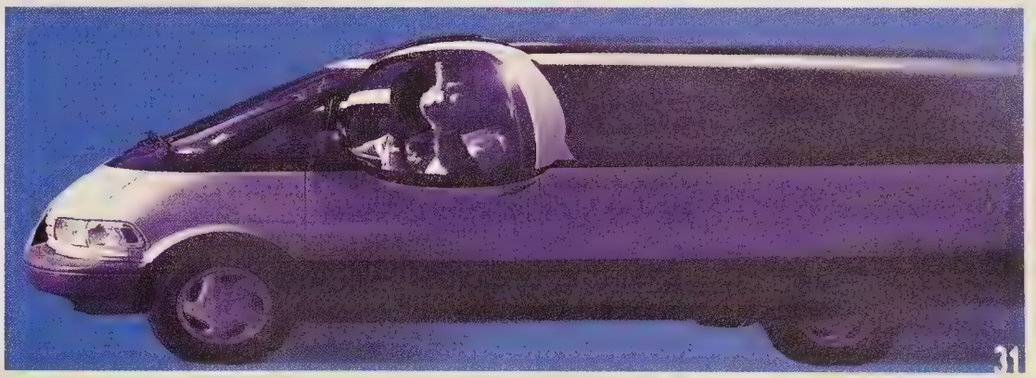
The term freeway is a huge misnomer. It's rarely free-flowing and hardly stress-free, and while it may not technically cost any money to drive on one, you pay with your soul. Locked within steel and glass, sweating behind a too-tight seatbelt while staring at someone's "Rush is Right" bumper sticker, it's a vanity-plated invitation to lose your mind.

Experts call this phenomenon ROAD RAGE, and it comes from many sources: construction, gridlock, and pedestrians moving slower than the sales of the last Spin Doctors album. First and foremost, road rage stems from bad drivers: tailgaters, speed freaks...basically, everyone else on the road but you. The American Automobile Association reports a 51% increase in road rage, or reckless driving, in the first half of the '90s, while a private survey (conducted by EPIC-MA of Michigan) shows that 80% of all drivers are angry most, or all of the time. It's a simple equation:

FRUSTRATION + BIG MACHINE ÷ HELPLESSNESS = SEVERE ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR

If Jack Kerouac were alive today, he'd just stay home.

What would modern commuters do without their car horns? With just a few careful beeps, it's the arbiter of justice; Judge Judy of the intersection. Left hand turn from the right lane? Blasphemy! 35mph on the highway? Drive a friggin' go-cart! Honking a horn is practically colloquial English for "How DARE you SCREW me like that!" But the horn is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to mobile communication.



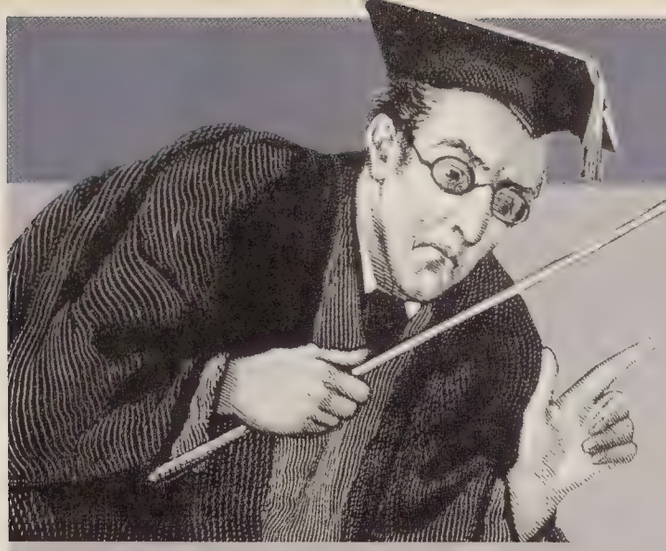
A car's design naturally dictates that the raised middle finger becomes the ultimate expression of disgust. Very few of us have the time, or the voice loud enough, to deliver a sermon over the sound of a jackhammer, or a Snoop Doggy Dogg CD. Think of the finger as an emergency angioplasty for the highway's clogged arteries.

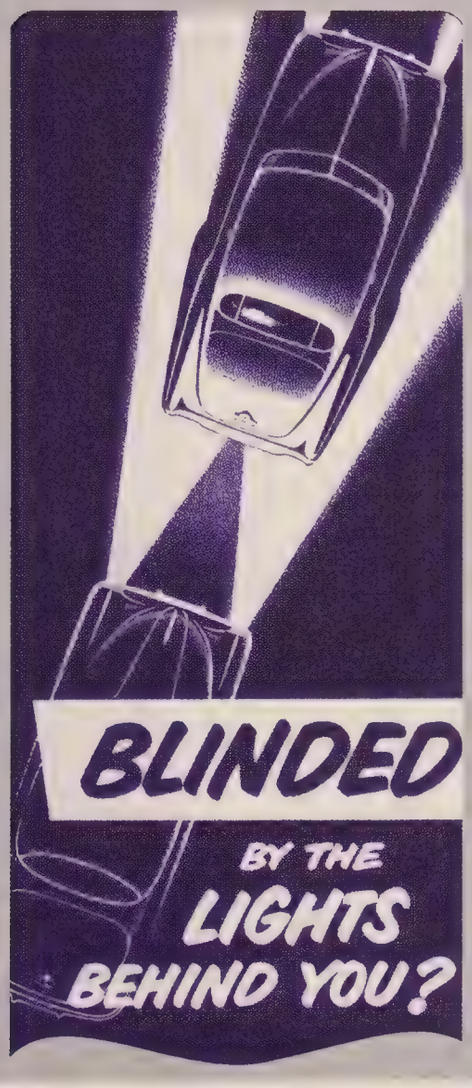
According to the American Driver and Traffic Safety Association, 15 years ago nearly 90% of all new drivers had taken an official driver's safety course, whereas today that figure is somewhere between 30-50%. Meanwhile, there are 17% more cars on the roads than there were just 10 years ago. More cars and more incompetent drivers naturally lead to a grumpier populace. Our own scientific survey, conducted with the aid of a telephone book and a few cold beers, confirms this. It also confirms that people don't like getting random calls at home.

Of six respondents, 4 hung up, while two said they're "often" angry while driving. One woman even told us she was likely to flip the bird 20% of the time. Others said, "how did you get this number?" and "*I told you people not to call here anymore!*" Nevertheless, the truth rings loud and clear: it's every man and woman for him or herself. We live in a world where the closest thing to "civic pride" is when everybody joins in yelling at the guy with the out-of-town plates. Forget 911: when you're in a crisis, the only thing you can count on is the middle savior of your own hand.

But while the finger can be a stress-reliever, it isn't always the best for personal safety. On more than one occasion, flipping the bird has led to injury and even death. A man from Chula Vista, CA was shot in the head on highway I-15 back in 1990 because he gave the finger in response to a group of men flashing gang signals. Yikes! You can't just go around flicking off everyone you please, especially if your victims have prison tattoos and triceps bigger than a Thanksgiving turkey. A successful bird requires you to size up your opponent on a moment's notice. However, it may also depend on your choice of vehicle.

We called several popular auto manufacturers to rate their cars for finger-ability. How fast can a Lincoln get you away from a Hell's Angel with a crowbar? Will an older Japanese import protect you when the skies are full of lead? This handy guide lets you be pissed-off **and** well-informed.





THE FOLLOWING SHITTY DRIVERS DESERVE THE FINGER:

1) Anyone who tailgates so closely, her bumper violates the interior of your exhaust pipe.

2) Anyone who cuts you off and backs into the parking space you were waiting for.

3) Anyone driving a sports utility vehicle in a city where it doesn't snow.

4) Anyone weaving back and forth like a dog casually sniffing the asses of his kennel mates.

5) Anyone who hits the breaks constantly like it's a game-show buzzer.

6) Anyone who leaves his turn signal on for more than 100 feet and doesn't turn.

7) Anyone flagrantly violating the carpool lane—being over 300lbs. doesn't technically make you two people.

8) Anyone too busy talking on his mobile phone to notice he took off your sideview mirror.

9) Anyone with a sticker touting her child's academic achievement.

10) Anyone behind the wheel of a car worth more than your annual income.

"...the finger made me do it..." "... and then he gave

[NOTE: All information was obtained from customer information lines. None of these auto manufacturers go on record as actually suggesting that you flip the bird in their vehicles.]

1998 LINCOLN CONTINENTAL

Horsepower: 260
Acceleration: 0-60 mph in 8.7 seconds
Glass Window Thickness: 4.9mm - front, 4.7 - front door, 3.8 - rear
Safety/Security: Dual airbags, anti-theft alarm, and a "rescue system" that, with the touch of a button on the dash, connects you with either a tow truck or an ambulance. You cocky bastards may be in need of the latter.

1998 AUDI A6

Horsepower: 200
Acceleration: 0-60 mph in 9.3 seconds
Glass Window Thickness: "I'm sorry, sir, but there's no one here who knows the answer to that question."
Safety/Security: Airbags, 5mph impact bumpers, and break-resistant, insulated glass (for UV rays, not bullets). Options include a voice-activated cell phone, so you can dial 911 and still have all your insulting fingers available.

1984 TOYOTA TERCEL

Horsepower: 62
Acceleration: N/A, though it'll probably do 0-60 in about 5 minutes if it's not too cold outside.
Glass Window Thickness: "We do not have that information."
Safety/Security: None available at time of manufacture; however Toyota points out other options including "air conditioning, AM/FM cassette, and rear windshield wipers." It's feasible that in the event of assault, you could use the wipers to defend yourself.

1988 M1A1 ABRAMS TANK

Horsepower: 1500
Acceleration: Although top speed is limited to 42 mph, it can plow through 4 ft. deep streams and cross 9 ft. wide ditches.
Glass Window Thickness: No exterior glass, only large plates of depleted uranium armor.
Safety/Security:: The Abrams tank's massive 120 mm main gun, twin 7.62mm and .50 caliber machine guns, combined with a huge 1,500 hp turbine engine, make it particularly suitable for attacking or defending fortified positions. A finger of any caliber can be launched from the top hatch of the vehicle. Although susceptible to air strikes, soft civilian targets should present no problem.

You can always fly.

Statistical Analysis: For a quick flick and a safe getaway, it's the Lincoln, although the Audi's voice-activated phone is nice if you're Stephen Hawking. While not very speedy, the Abrams tank is a strong deterrent and will likely stop any loudmouth in his tracks. Most of the readers of this book probably drive a car closer to the 1984 Toyota, and shouldn't be so bold.

The finger may not be kind, it may not be pretty, and it may not even be an option if you've been clumsy with the blender, but it does work wonders with modern transportation. Keep in mind that motorized vehicles can be dangerous things, second only to people's boiling tempers. We urge you to make your bird a cautious one. Like they say in driver's ed: "**finger on green, and not in-between!**"

Finger Fact:
The Trashmen's 1964 hit song *Surfin' Bird* is primarily composed of one line—"Bird, bird, bird, the bird is the word."

It's Christmas. It's Easter. It's your friend Sheldon's bar mitzvah. You're dressed in a tan corduroy dress and posed as stiffly as Theodore Roosevelt atop Mount Rushmore. **Click!** One smile and it's over, but you walk away feeling used, exploited—a regular family-portrait whore.

No matter how old you get, some idiot's always trying to take your picture. Even the sweetest people can turn into the most obnoxious bullies, forcing you to commemorate some *priceless* moment with an insipid photo. Once these snapshots are entombed in an album that smells faintly of nail-polish remover, what good are they?

You must take control of the situation. YOU MUST **RUIN** THE PICTURE.

If you choose the obvious route, you'll hear the phrase, "**Stop making faces!**" repeated over and over again. This gets annoying, and let's face it, not everyone can be Jim Carrey for any fool and his Nikon. So what *can* you do? Something that proves you're a **rebel**. A rebel with a single digit cause.

The finger is, without exception, your best solution. It's fast, it's furious, and compositionally, it's a focal point for the eyes. The finger says, "You want to take a picture of *me*? Take a picture of **this**!"

I hit upon this stroke of genius during my last family vacation. After the hundredth boring picture on the beach, my mother had turned into a "**Say 'Cheese'" Shrieking Banshee**. It was time for action. My brother sensed something evil and tried to restrain me, but it was too late. Captured on celluloid forever were clear skies, picturesque palms, and my lightning quick middle finger. My mother was shocked. My brother started to cry. As for my father, well, it's a good thing I'm an adult now, or my dad would have been arrested for child-abuse instead of assault and battery. But what did I expect?

Did I think the finger *wouldn't* piss them off?

TIP: Some of you might be shy about giving your family the finger. But you aren't flipping the bird to anyone in your family per se, but just to the concept of the boring group photo in general. The world wouldn't be a worse place if all these photos mysteriously disappeared.

Of course it would. But Stravinsky's *Rite Of Spring* caused Parisians to riot when the music was first performed, and nowadays it hardly raises the heart rate of a geriatric cancer victim. *Catcher In The Rye* used to get burned twice a week; today it's about as controversial as *Garfield*. I told my family I was the new avant garde and would gladly risk alienating them for the sake of art. They just shook their heads, uncomprehending, but let it go for the rest of the trip. Philistines.

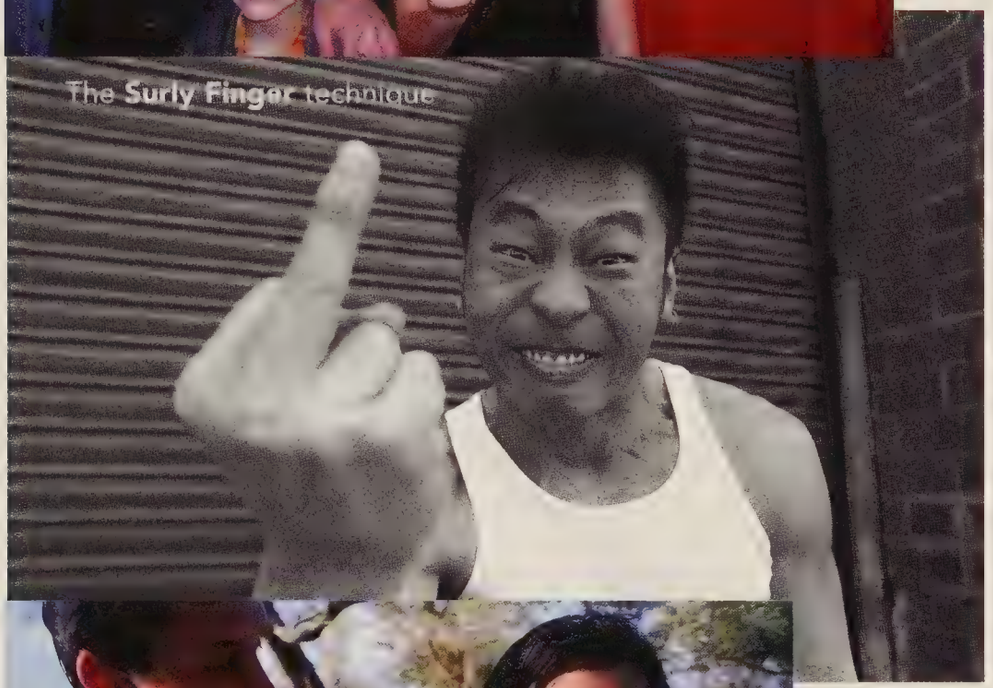
Today, there isn't a flashbulb alive that doesn't quake in my presence. Even Helmut Newton is afraid to take my picture. And he's into leather. I'm a master of the photo-finger, and with a little practice, you can be too.

The avant-garde stops for no one!

¡VIVA LA FINGER!

Betty Wanape is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin. She likes model trains and has a steel plate in her skull.

The **Sly Finger** technique



The **Surly Finger** technique

The Last Minute Thru

3 Ways to Insert the Finger into any Photo

THE SLY FINGER

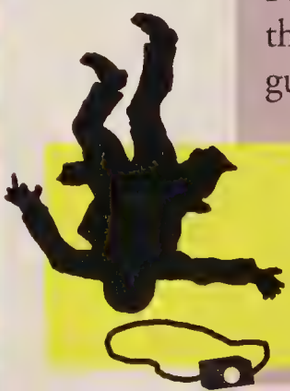
Keep it about waist high and wait. Don't make a fuss. The photographer will be too busy ensuring everyone's heads are in frame to notice your subtle sabotage. By the time you're discovered, the treasured moment will be a thing of the past and you will be far, far away.

THE SURLY FINGER

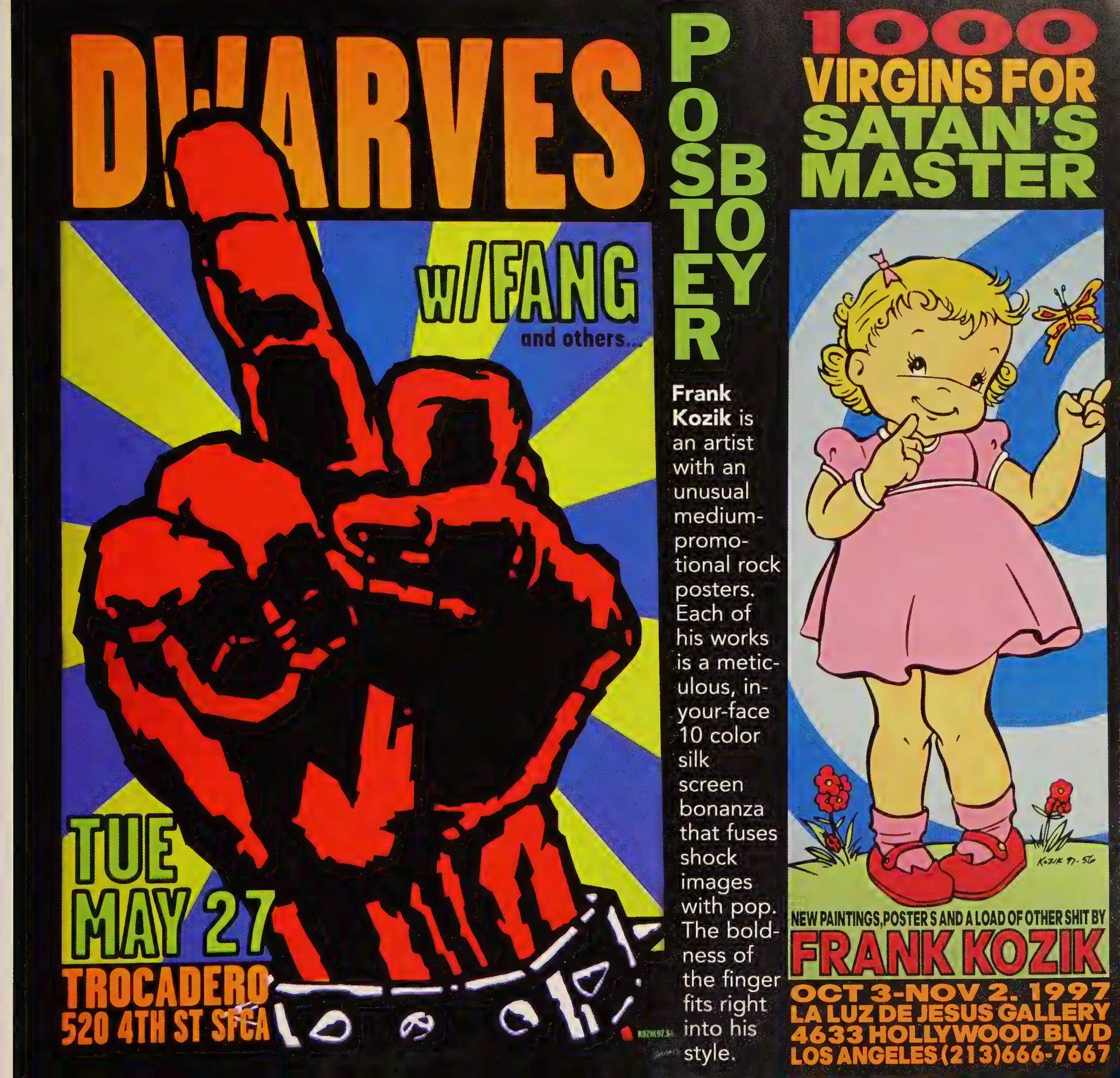
Hold it high, and hold it proud. This is your way of saying, "**I'm trapped here with these people, and it sucks.**" The advantage to this technique is that eventually people will stop asking you to pose at all. Of course, this method may also invite a beating by drunken relatives who "fought in the war," so we suggest wearing comfortable shoes in case you need to make a hasty exit.

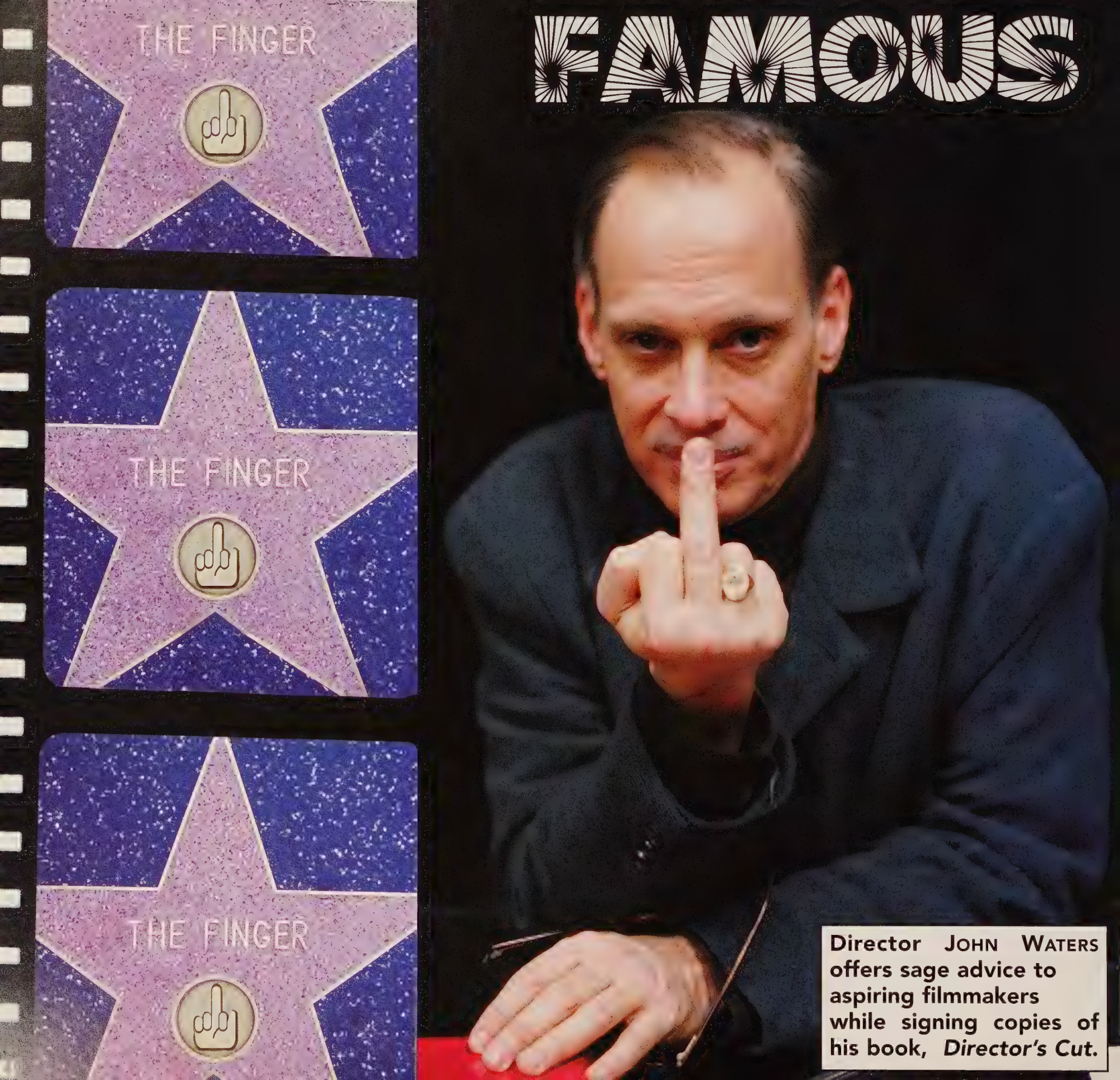
THE LAST MINUTE THRUST

1-2-3, say "**Cheese!**" Surprise the focus-impaired photographer by changing your pose and launching your finger just prior to impact. Instead of a big jerk, you'll just come off as "Mr. Good-Time Fun Machine." Everyone will laugh, and maybe the photographer will get the hint and head for the guacamole dip.



CAUTION: Don't use this method if the photographer is backed up to the edge a steep incline, as the surprise factor could result in serious injury or death.


DWARVES
w/FANG
and others...
TUE
MAY 27
TROCADERO
520 4TH ST SFCA
POSTER BOY
Frank Kozik is an artist with an unusual medium-promotional rock posters. Each of his works is a meticulous, in-your-face 10 color silk screen bonanza that fuses shock images with pop. The boldness of the finger fits right into his style.
1000
VIRGINS FOR
SATAN'S
MASTER
NEW PAINTINGS, POSTER S AND A LOAD OF OTHER SHIT BY
FRANK KOZIK
OCT 3-NOV 2. 1997
LA LUZ DE JESUS GALLERY
4633 HOLLYWOOD BLVD
LOS ANGELES (213)666-7667



Director JOHN WATERS offers sage advice to aspiring filmmakers while signing copies of his book, *Director's Cut.*

IS A CELEBRITY FINGER PHOTO REALLY CONSIDERED TABOO?

For maverick icons, rebellious rock stars and pissed off rappers, it's a good resume-builder. For blow-dried supermodels, it's an easy way to prove they can count. In this pre-packaged age of phony smiles and even phonier teeth, the finger is a victory for honesty and integrity. So why did several famous people decline to be in this book?

Perhaps our current cultural climate won't allow it. We live in a family-safe world, full of rancid Disney musicals, grotesque theme restaurants, and medicine bottles that are really difficult to open. But the finger isn't *dirty*—it's useful, fun, and surprisingly refreshing. So why can't celebrities blow off a little steam? Do we really believe their lives are so sanitized? If we force our favorite stars to deny their base instincts to flip, we may one day have to commit them to a **Betty Ford Center for the Digitally Challenged**. Please, stop the madness.

In reality, celebrities themselves aren't always against flipping the bird. The objectors are often their managers, lawyers, and accountants—people who don't want their clients associated with anything ***unpopular***. Now, maybe **belligerent and scary** isn't the best public persona (unless you're a member of the World Wrestling Federation) but do stars really need to lose their Jell-O endorsements over something as silly as the finger? We think not.

Join us in saluting the brave celebrities unwilling to live this lie any longer. They flip the bird day and night and they don't care if you know it; managers, lawyers, and the **E! Channel** be damned.

Rapper ICE CUBE will bust a digit in your ass if you're not nice to him.

Singer Grace Slick shows off her own, one-eared white rabbit.

Comedian Lenny Bruce flips off the audience when words fail to be dirty enough.

LOVE YOUR FINGER

Daredevil rapper and extreme finger enthusiast, REDMAN, leaps 13,000 feet to deliver a freefalling fuck you.

FINGER FACT:
In the '60s TV series *Batman*, Liberace once guest-starred as a pianist named Chandell, who led a double life as a criminal with the alias *"Fingers."*

"The finger is a primal expression of anger that brings us back to a time before words."—MICKEY HART, drummer of the *Grateful Dead*.

French actress Julie Delpy does it American style.

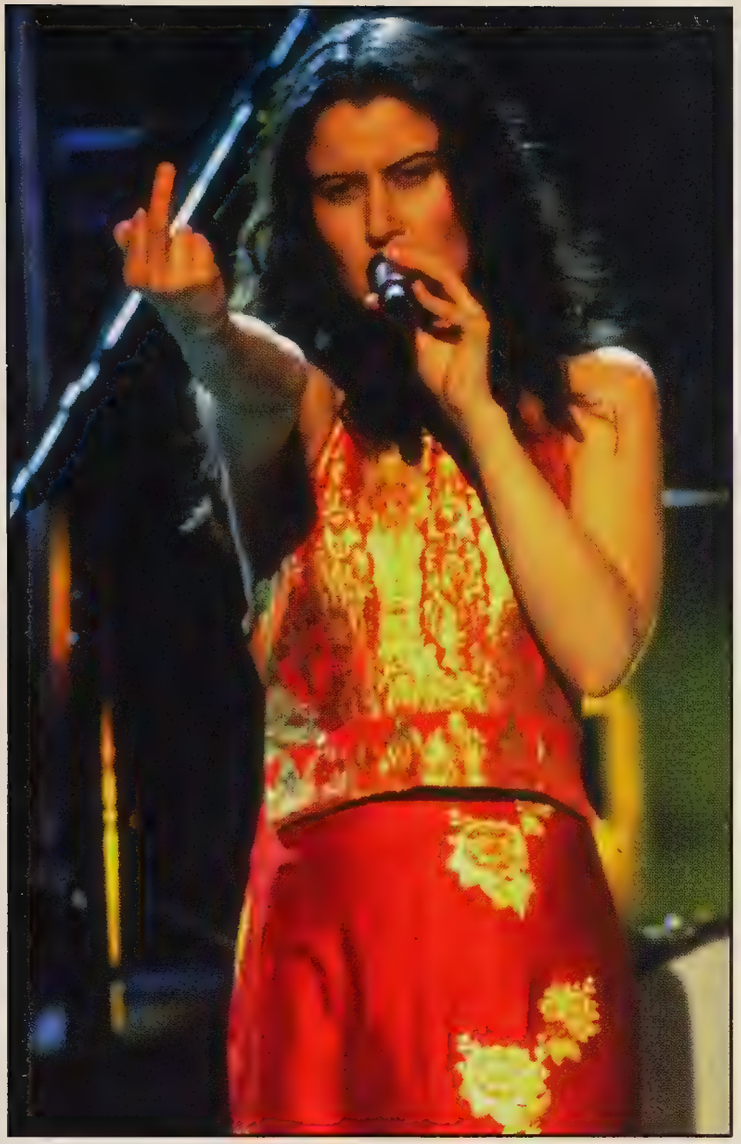
FINGER FACT:
President Lyndon Johnson's wife was nicknamed *Ladybird*. A campaign button for the 1968 presidential election read, "You got the BIRD in '64, don't get HUMPHED in '68."

HOW TO GET A CELEBRITY FINGER PHOTO

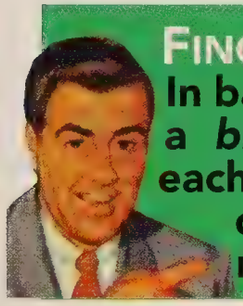
The authors of **THE FINGER** aren't exactly Hollywood bigshots. We just happen to have the tenacity of crab lice. But even bloodsucking parasites sometimes have a hard time getting their way—which is why we've compiled eight easy tips for nabbing Celebrity Finger Photos. Of course, getting permission to *publish* the pictures is another story.

WARNING: THE AUTHORS AND PUBLISHER OF THIS BOOK ASSUME NO LIABILITY FOR YOUR PERSONAL WELL-BEING SHOULD THESE STEPS BACKFIRE, RESULTING IN HUMILIATION, INJURY, OR DEATH.

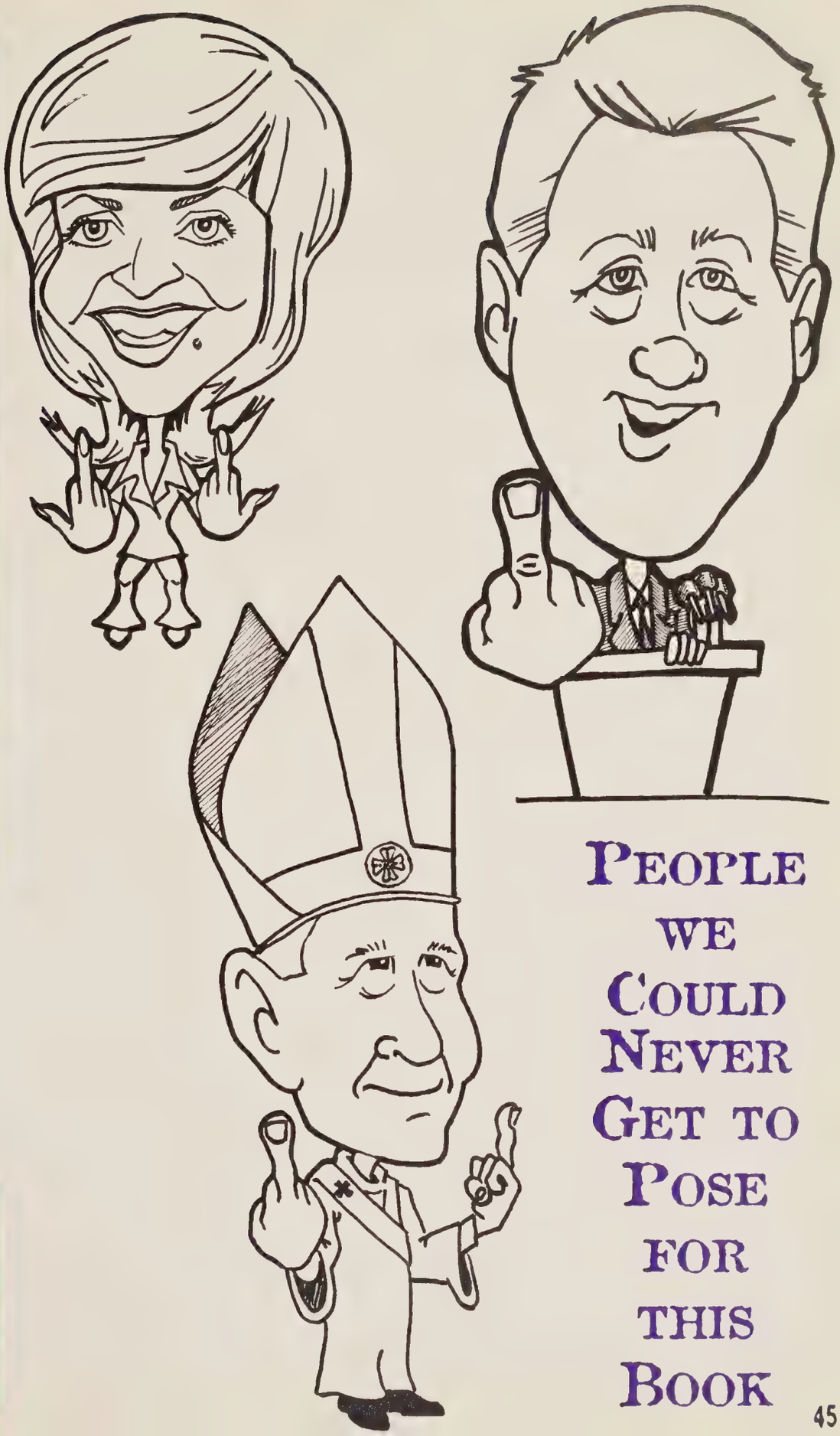
1) Live in a big city.
2) Go to a celebrity-studded event. We like book signings. Publishers think famous faces sell books; if that isn't true, explain Jamie Farr's autobiography, *Just Farr Fun*.
3) Buy the celebrity's book. Otherwise, they will think you're a stalker or a cheap shitty bastard.
4) Wait patiently. When your turn comes up in line, tell the celebrity you're a big fan. Then nicely ask if they'll flip you off for the camera.
6) Pray that this celebrity has a sense of humor.
7) Make sure there isn't a large man named "Rocco" standing behind them.
8) Point camera and shoot. Even if they ask you not to.



Singer Paula Cole flips a bird to the audience during her performance at the *1998 Grammy Awards*. Unfortunately, her free flying flip was edited out of the television broadcast.

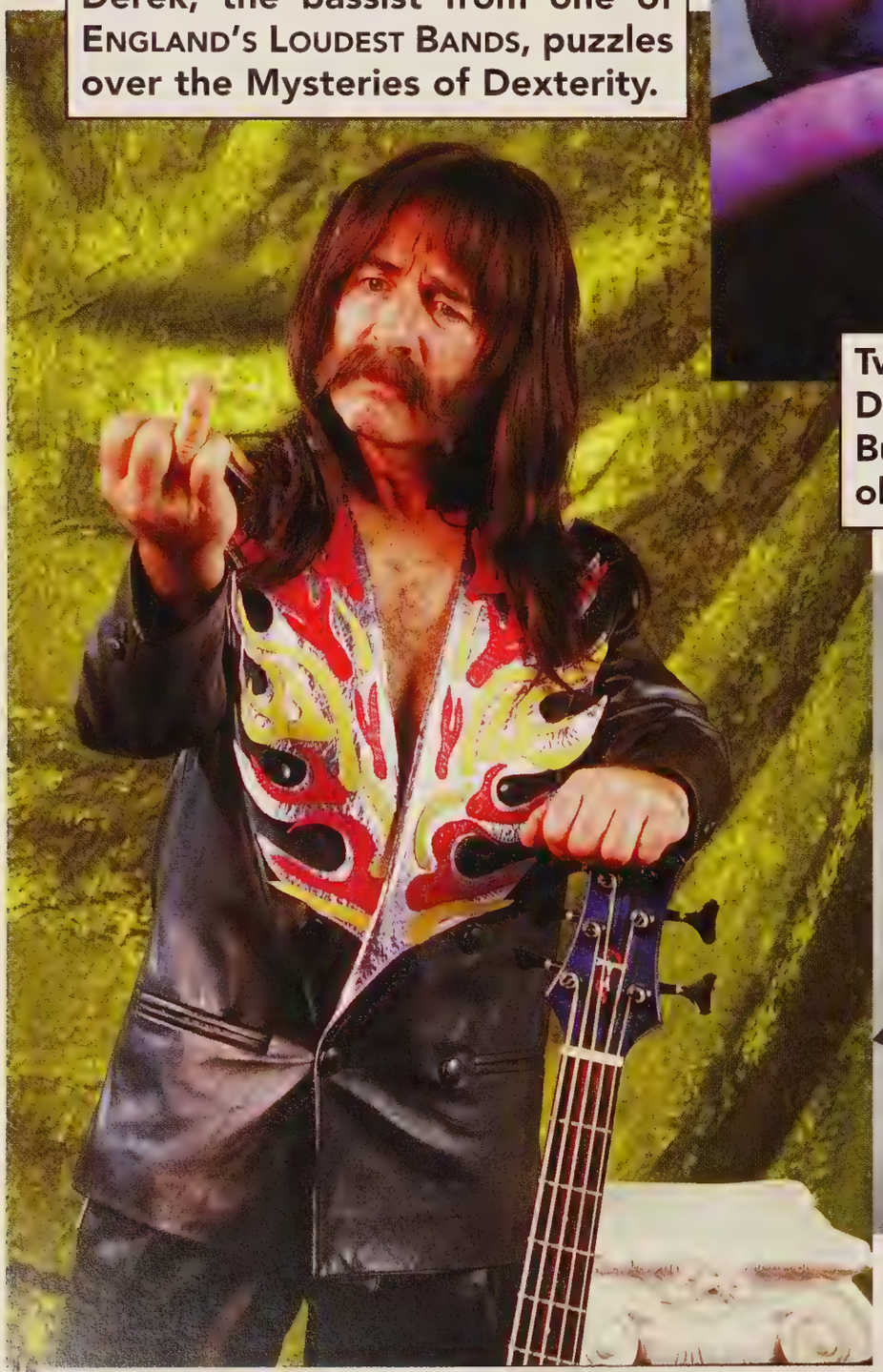


Finger Fact:
In badminton, players smack a *birdie*, or *shuttlecock* at each other. The jury is still out as to which term is more offensive.

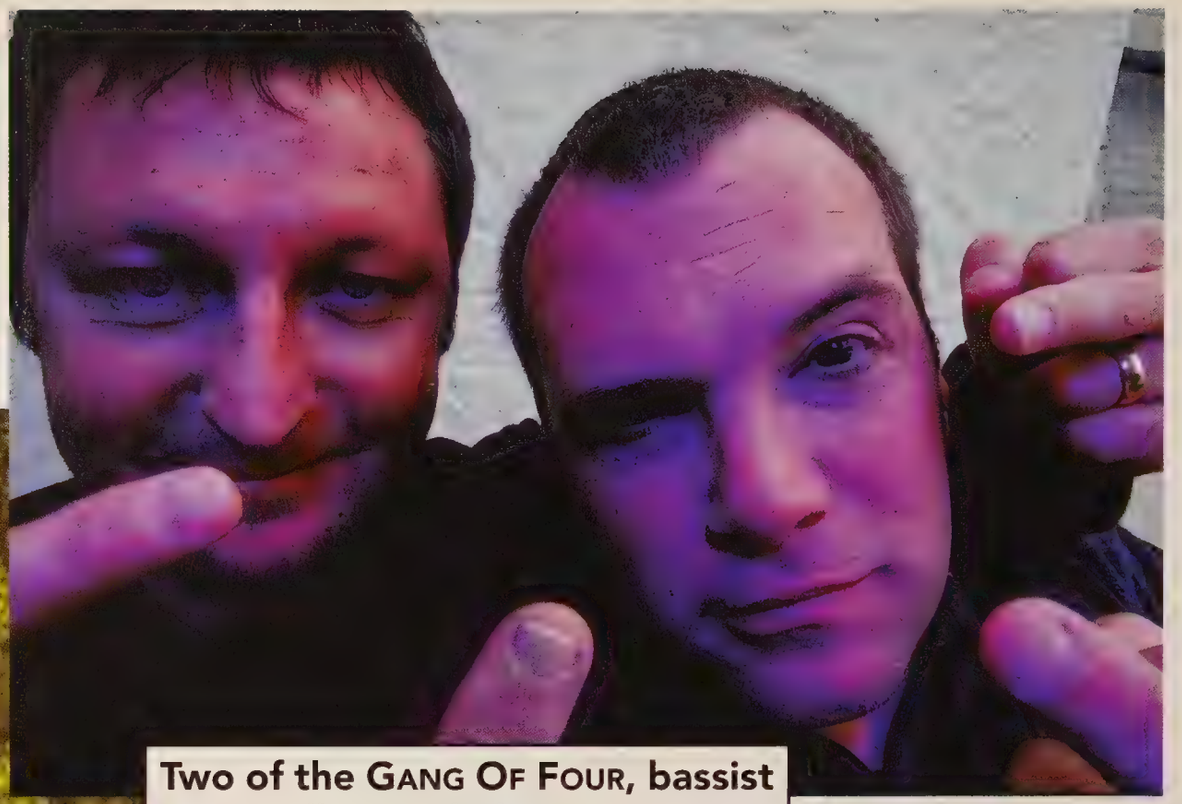


People We Could Never Get to Pose for This Book

FINGER FACT:
The Rolling Stones' album cover for *Sticky Fingers*, designed by Andy Warhol, featured a pair of jeans whose real zipper, when undone, exposed Mick Jagger's lips and tongue.



Derek, the bassist from one of ENGLAND'S LOUDEST BANDS, puzzles over the Mysteries of Dexterity.



Two of the GANG OF FOUR, bassist Dave Allen and drummer Hugo Burnham, display their fingers of old school fury.

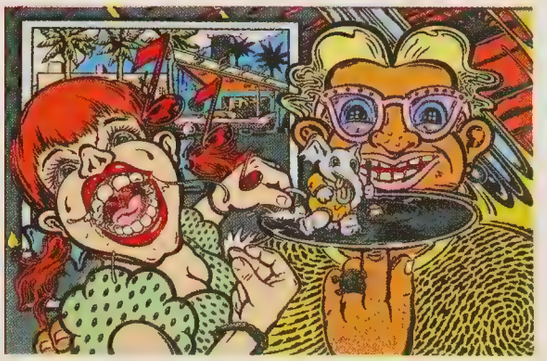
Swedish film legend, DEATH, shows his contempt for his later Hollywood roles and all living things in general.

The cover of the **Grateful Dead's** 1974 release, ***Skeletons From The Closet,*** features an androgynous hipster, Venus de Milo, and their signature skeleton smoking a joint and spinning a vinyl record on his middle finger. This design was oddly prophetic for the demise of the LP format.

JOHN VAN HAMERSVELD'S drawing, Sep's Place, inspired the Dead's album cover, which he also illustrated.

FINGER FACT:

Jerry Garcia was the world-renowned guitar player for the *Grateful Dead*, despite missing the middle digit of his right hand. Jerry never liked to talk about it, but apparently his brother accidentally chopped it off with an axe when the two were children.

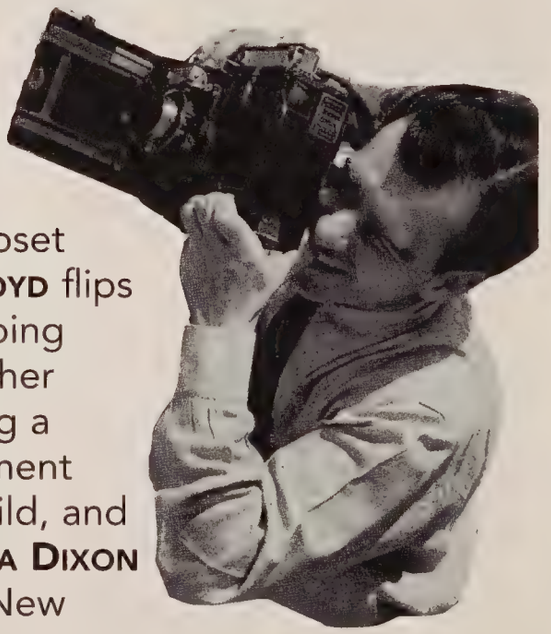


PAPARAZZI

Not all celebrities flash the finger just for the sake of this book. Many express their love and affection directly to the members of the **paparazzi**. You know who they are—those poor freelance photographers everyone hates. The more pesky and controversial their methods get, the more Hollywood insiders despise them. Yet, the angry photos these photographers capture just get better and better. What would you rather see? A dull photo of Elizabeth Shue waving to fans, or a clandestine shot of Elizabeth Taylor tossing some punk over the top of her limo and giving him the finger? No contest! **So thank you, paparazzi!** Just stay out of Sean Penn's way and you'll be fine.

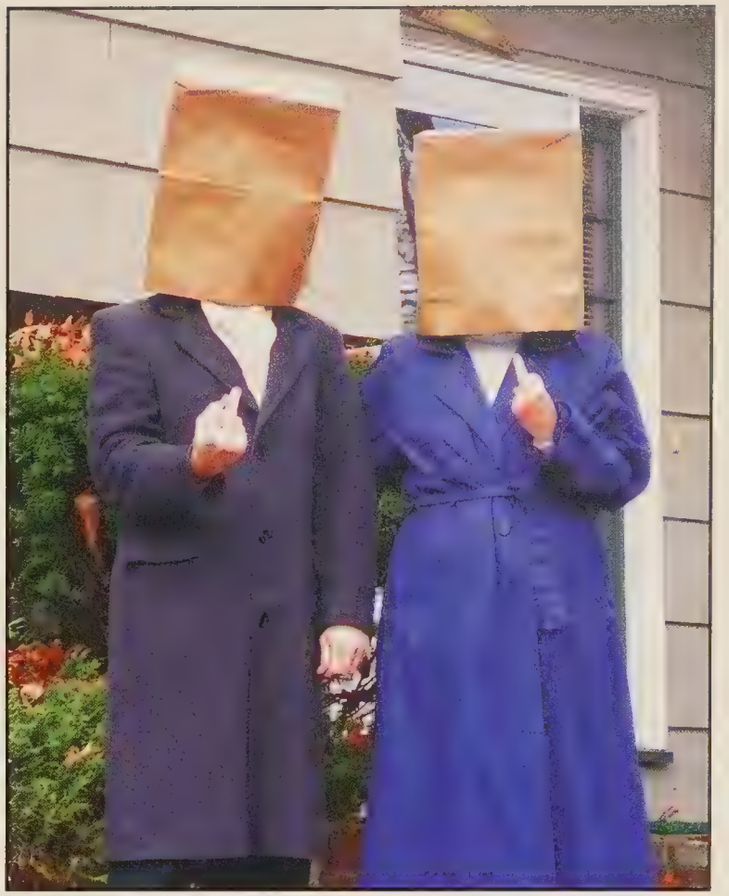
NOTE: Our lawyers would like us to mention we have NEVER run across a photo of Elizabeth Taylor tossing anyone around OR giving the finger. But if you happened to have the negatives, give us a call.

Actor **Mickey Rourke** is caught on celluloid outside an unidentified women's restroom in New York.



A visibly upset **Dan Aykroyd** flips off a snooping photographer interrupting a family moment with his child, and wife **Donna Dixon** outside a New York restaurant.

Heavyweight method eater, **Marlon Brando**, demonstrates he is the Godfather of fingers near the set of ***The Freshman***.



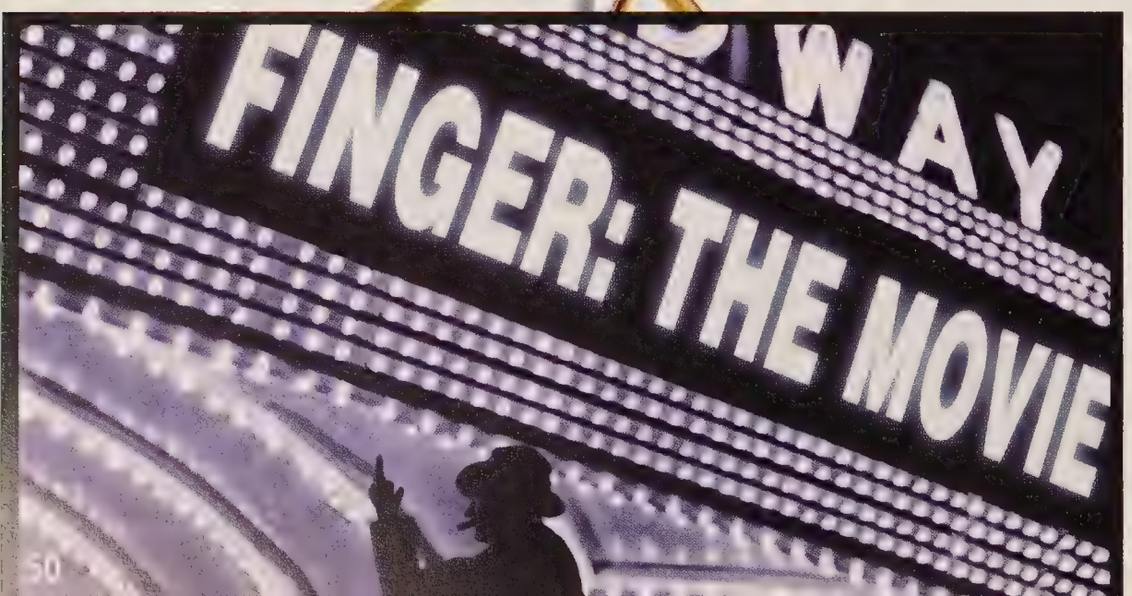
Some **Very Famous Celebrities** protect their identities when flipping off the paparazzi. Especially after a lengthy pandering trial.

Courtney Love and **Drew Barrymore** arrive at the **1995 MTV Music Awards** in good spirits. Naughty girls need love too.

Finger Fact:
The long and narrow Finger Lakes are located in Upstate New York. There is no Middle Finger Lake.

Finger Fact:
The 1985 feature film *Sesame Street Presents Follow That Bird!* featured an eclectic cast including Chevy Chase, Sandra Bernhard, and Big Bird.

ATTENTION PRODUCERS! The film rights to **FINGER: THE MOVIE** are still available. Also available: **Finger: The Musical** and **Finger: The Action Figure**. **FINGER: THE ONE WOMAN SHOW**, a touching chronicle of a woman's ovarian cyst and the doctor who refused to treat her, has already been optioned.



The finger's nasty influence has been felt in almost every artistic medium. Unfortunately, this influence is generally downplayed, even discouraged. In modern cinema, for example, the finger gets more roles than Al Pacino yet it earns less respect than Carrot Top. "How can this be?" you ask. How can such a fine performer go unrecognized for so many dedicated, emotional performances? Why does Hollywood relegate this would-be Player to an anonymous part of studio scenery, even lower than a production assistant on the set of **Leprechaun V**?

The tides may be turning. Soon, we believe, the world of Tinseltown will acknowledge the finger's vast and important body of work. The day shall come when a middle finger appears in every frame of every feature film, as mandated by the Motion Picture Association Of America. Every film will become **FINGER: THE MOVIE**, with all the merchandising tie-ins: **Finger Puppets**, **Finger Hats**, and **Finger *Unhappy* Meals.** Finally, there will be **Finger: THE RIDE**, and **Finger: The Las Vegas Casino.**

The Finger Shall Overcome!

We asked every major studio in Hollywood to let us use stills from their movies in this book. Here were their friendly replies:

WARNER BROTHERS: NO. "...because we're a family company."
(From the rights and clearances dept.)

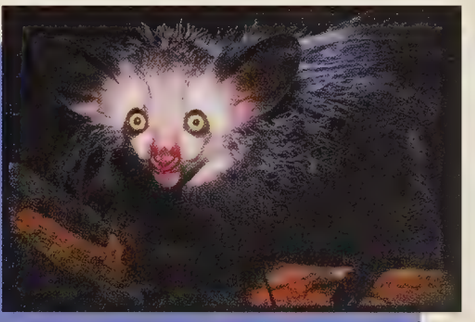
VIACOM (Paramount): **NO.** "...due to a variety of legal concerns and business considerations."
(A formal letter in response to our queries.)

20TH CENTURY FOX: NO. "We would never want to be associated with that sort of thing. A book about ***the finger***? **Ugh**."
(A guy in the rights department.)

UNIVERSAL: NO NO NO. "...under no circumstances are you to use *any materials* of *any characters* from the films, the titles, or make **ANY REFERENCES TO THE PROPERTY FOR ANY PURPOSE WHATSOEVER**."
(A friendly letter from the Publicity Rights Dept.)

Geez. Universal couldn't be talking about blockbuster "properties" like **THE BLUES BROTHERS 2000**, **JAWS 3-D**, and the unforgettable **BLACK DOG**, could they?

A.J. Johnson and **Freez Luv** pose as ex-cons who cater Kid's bachelor party in ***House Party III***. This picture wasn't used as a publicity still, nor did the finger appear anywhere in the final film, yet this photo still receives an **Honorary Golden Finger Award** for representing the only movie that dared to be in this book.



FINGER FACT:
The tiny *Aye-ayes* of Madagascar have long, snake-like middle fingers they use to catch insect prey. If an aye-aye points its middle finger at you, natives say you're cursed. Unfortunately the only way to remove the hex is to kill the offending lemur.

Photo by David Haring

The Golden Finger

The **Golden Finger** is a distinguished award commemorating the one thing we're experts in: the finger. Forget the plot, the characters, even the focus. We're not **Leonard Maltin**. If you want film reviews, his book is a lot cheaper.

THE BEST MIDDLE FINGERS OF FILM

(Presented in Alphabetical Order)

Air Heads, 1994 **Director**: Michael Lehmann
Approximate Time of Finger (ATF): 0:38:30 Steve Buscemi raises a double fisted finger to the police after he, Adam Sandler, and Brandon Fraser successfully take over a radio station in order to play their demo tape.

Airplane, 1977 **Directors**: Jim Abrahams/David Zucker/Jerry Zucker
ATF: 0:17:02 When air traffic controller Robert Stack drives to the airport, we see rear-screen projection of a cyclist giving a reckless driver the bird.

Alien: Resurrection, 1997 **Director**: Jeunet
ATF: 1:10:05 Ron Perlman suggests that the crew will escape much quicker if they "ditch the cripple"; the cripple (Dominique Pinon) responds with a flexible Middle One. Although this film was directed by a Frenchman, the finger is American. Truly, we have triumphed.

Foreigner

Bean, 1997 **Director**: Mel Smith.
ATF: 1:16:01 The British Jerry Lewis comes to America and finds himself the target of a deadly middle finger. Being an imbecile, he takes this finger to be a friendly greeting, and begins joyously flashing it to unsuspecting people all over Los Angeles.

The Breakfast Club, 1985 **Director**: John Hughes
ATF: 0:25:20 Emilio Estevez says, "You know something, man, if we weren't in school right now I'd waste you." Judd responds with the popular: "Can you hear this? You want me to turn it up?" Later, (0:27:14) Molly Ringwald gives the bird to Judd Nelson when he tells her she'll someday be married and fat.

Alien

Buckaroo Banzai, 1984 **Director**: W.D. Richter
ATF: 1:28:30 John Lithgow's Dr. Lizardo says to his alien assistant Bigbuti (Christopher Lloyd) "Shut up, Bigbuti. You Coward. You are the weakest individual I ever knew!" Bigbuti responds by giving Lizardo the finger, complete with a futuristic *Whoosh* sound effect.

Hippies

Easy Rider, 1969 **Director**: Dennis Hopper
ATF: 1:33:43. Perhaps the most famous cinema finger ever: Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda ride into hash heaven after Dennis gives it to a hick in a pick-up.

Every Which Way But Loose, 1978 **Director**: James Fargo
ATF: 1:35:57 Clyde the Orangutan gives a *digitus primutus* to the bamboozled black widow biker gang as he and Clint Eastwood escape their bumbling wrath. Those darn monkeys!

Orangutan

Evil Dead 2, 1987 **Director**: Sam Rami
ATF: 0:33:02 Ash (Bruce Campbell) is given the finger by his own dismembered hand in response to his efforts to shoot the hand with a shotgun.

Possession

Grease, 1977 **Director**: Randall Kleiser
ATF: 1:13:38 Leo and his date give vigorous fingers to a judge when they are disqualified from the dance contest during the *Hand Jive* number.

Hard Bodies, 1984 **Director**: Mark Griffith
ATF: 0:08:26 Beach Bum gesticulates wildly at belligerent beach crashing nerds. Friend indicates that he's, "**flipping you off in 40 different languages.**" Later, (0:26:02) a middle-aged Casanova turns on a drinking fountain for a hot "hardbody" only to receive a scalding bird.

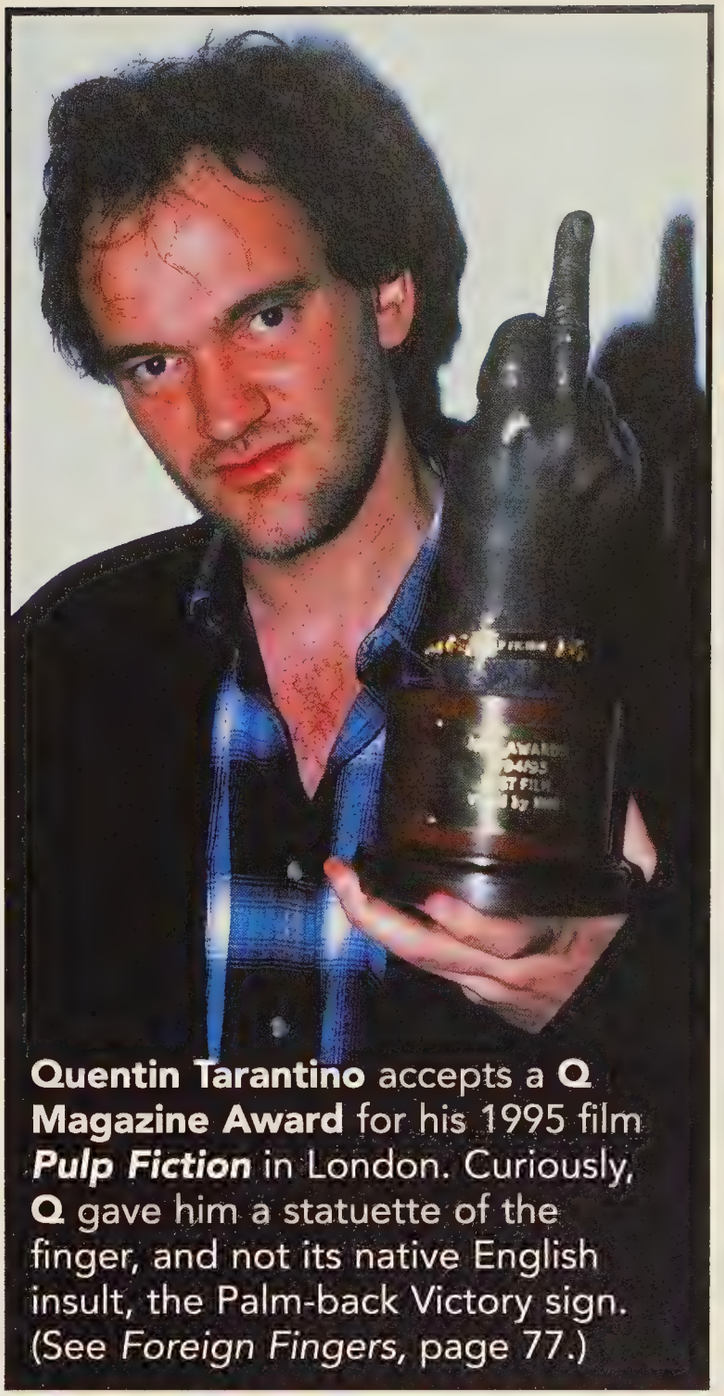
Breasts

Heathers, 1989 **Director**: Michael Lehmann
ATF: 1:33:17 Bird-loving director Lehmann has Christian Slater flip it in a moment of defiance during the film's climax. But his glory is cut short, literally, as Winona Ryder shoots it off in a bloody spray. A momentous occasion in cinema, surely studied at USC Film School for several years after.

Shot Off

Harold and Maude, 1971 **Director**: Hal Ashby
ATF: 0:59:30 Rich, young, and death obsessed Harold (Bud Cort) gives the finger behind his mother's back as she returns to the house with yet another blind date for him.

The Naked Gun, 1988 **Director**: David Zucker.
ATF: 0:33:54. Driving instructor John Houseman carefully describes finger procedure to a frazzled student after Inspector Drebin (Leslie Nielsen) commandeers their driver's ed. car for a high speed chase. The student performs the finger for nearby trucker, to Houseman's approval.



Quentin Tarantino accepts a **Q Magazine Award** for his 1995 film ***Pulp Fiction*** in London. Curiously, **Q** gave him a statuette of the finger, and not its native English insult, the Palm-back Victory sign. (See *Foreign Fingers*, page 77.)

Finger Fact:
The zany '60s TV series *Laugh-In* featured a regular segment where they would award someone the *Fickle Finger Of Fate* (an index finger). The show also included a grown man riding a children's bicycle into a fence.

Publicity Stills From FINGER: THE MOVIE

Dog trainer Cal Slopkin (Idi Amin) gets thrown in a dryer with a dog, a concrete block, and a remote-controlled fortune cookie in the Ooze Pictures release, **Finger: The Movie**.

Millionaire nudist Christopher Warner (Yuri Andropov) flips off an evil ghost haunting his nude beach in **Finger: The Movie.**

Flippy the Bird (Orson Welles) tries to fly south for the winter, but winds up in Montana, where he's mistaken for the President Of The United States in **Finger: The Movie.**

Geriatric

On Golden Pond, 1981 **Director**: Mark Rydell
ATF: 0:12:10 Senior citizens Nathan and Ethel (Henry Fonda, Katherine Hepburn) flip off a speed boat that swamps their canoe. Nathan chastises Ethel, exercising the ancient double standard that women should be better behaved than men.

Pecker, 1998 **Director**: John Waters.
ATF: 0:06:11 When aspiring young photographer Pecker (Edward Furlong) snaps a picture of a fat hillbilly girl without her permission; she flicks him off—just like most of the people in this book.

Shaft

Shaft, 1971 **Director**: Gordon Parks
ATF: 0:02:11 Badass detective John Shaft is almost hit by a cab during the opening credit sequence. Shaft gives the cabbie the finger, and the cabbie swears back at him. Shaft continues on his way, undaunted. He is Shaft. Shaft is the man.

Shampoo, 1975 **Director**: Hal Ashby
ATF: 1:13:12 Felicia (Lee Grant) angrily flips off philandering husband Lester (Jack Warden), then drives away, leaving him stranded at a swanky political fundraiser. Ironically, Grant gives a real live finger on the *Tonight Show* the very same year.

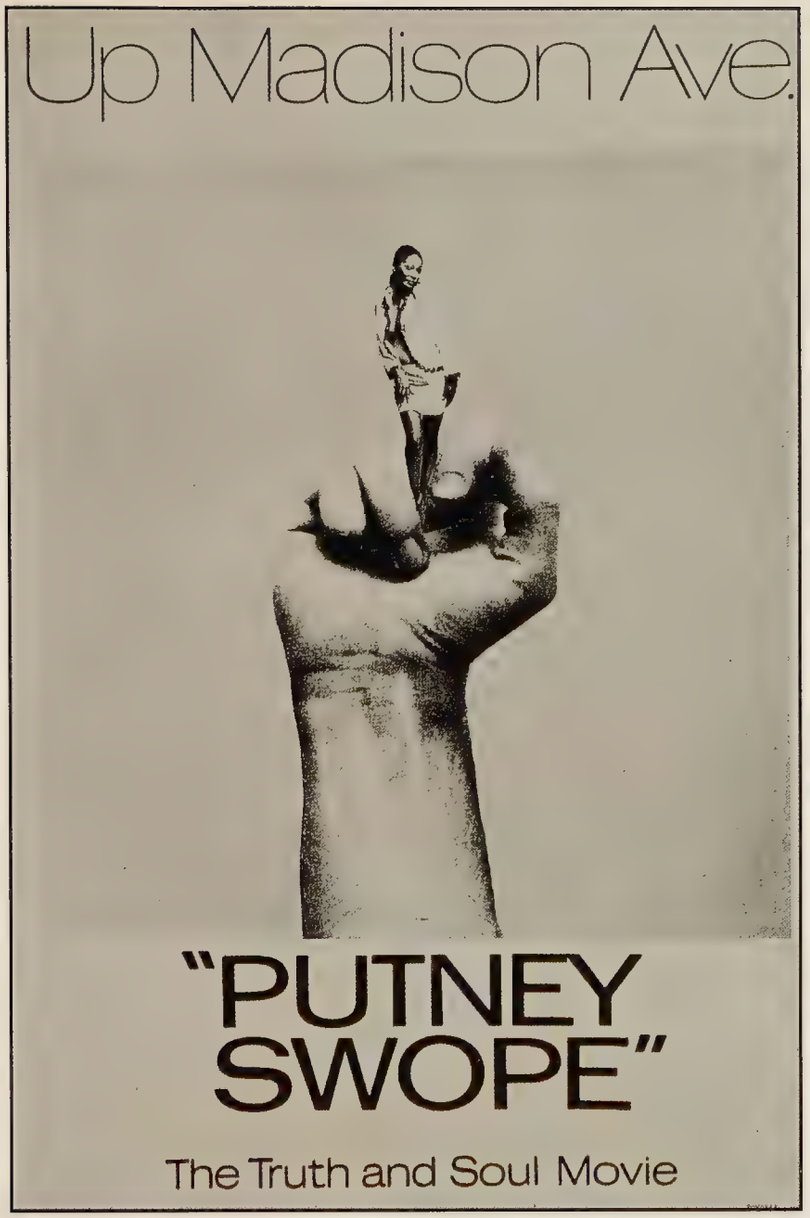
Titanic, 1997 **Director**: James Cameron
ATF: 1:30:24 Kate Winslet lobs a fleshy digit in the face of doomed love and an annoying boat disaster. (See *History* page 11.)

Jet Fighter

Top Gun, 1987 **Director**: Tony Scott
ATF: 0:08:30 Maverick (Tom Cruise) and Goose pull an inverted dive during hostile maneuvers in their F-14 and give a Soviet MIG pilot the finger. Maverick says, "Greetings" and they snap a Polaroid. Later, (0:28:47) Maverick and Goose recount the preceding tale to flight instructor Kelly McGillis complete with an embarrassing demonstration of said bird.

THE WORST FINGER IN FILM HISTORY

SFW, 1995 **Director**: Jeffrey Levy
Despite the image of Steven Dorff brandishing a censored flesh-flag in the film's print advertisements, there is **NO** actual finger in the film. **Blasphemy!**



Robert Downey Sr.'s 1969 satire, ***Putney Swope***, is about a black executive who takes over a whitebread ad agency. The mysterious mutant who posed for this portrait has since disappeared.

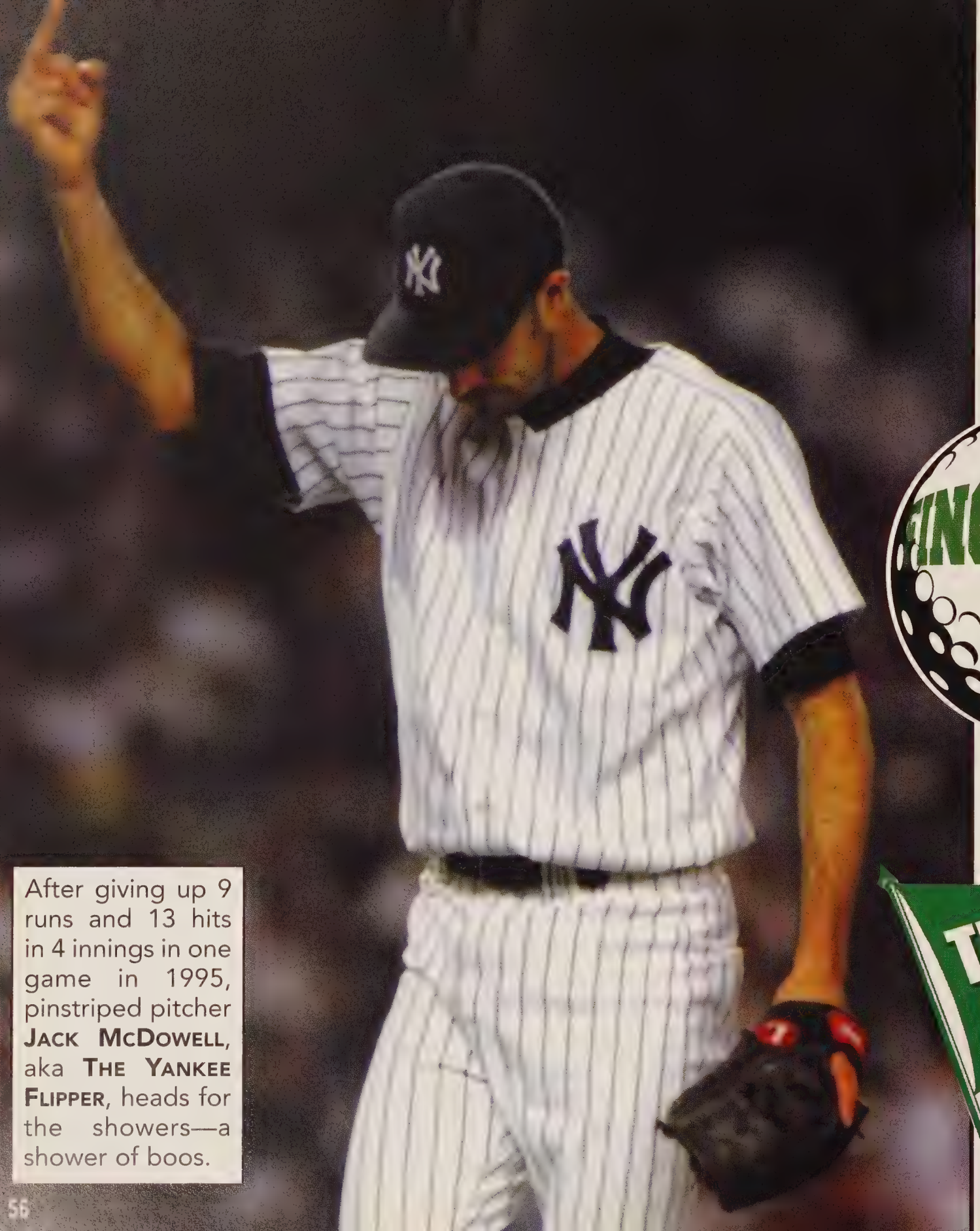
FINGER FACT:
***Finger-picking* is a complicated style of strumming for the guitar, banjo and ukulele which requires synchronized string-plucking, minus the aid of a plastic "pick."**

According to **NBC**'s **Broadcast Standards Department**, showing the bird on TV is like flipping it to the entire viewing audience—which isn't something they really want to do. References and indirect allusions to the finger are considered OK, but a shot of someone thrusting his middle one is considered a no-no, for reasons of "taste and discretion." As one of their local representatives put it, **"you see enough of that sort of thing on cable."**

However, during the Carson years of *The Tonight Show*, the finger once managed a brief cameo. Actress Lee Grant was appearing to promote her 1975 NBC sitcom, *Fay*. Right before Carson started taping, Grant was told her show had been cancelled. She then went onstage, made a reference to NBC's programming VP, and proceeded to give the camera—and the studio audience—a substantial (yet glamorous) middle finger. Although this may have elicited a big "hey-o!" from Ed McMahon, the national public never experienced the same thrill. Before the program aired, NBC covered Grant's finger with a black bar. Clearly, the Peacock would not support its fellow bird.

But what about the government? Does the **FCC** have any regulations against the finger? An FCC official admitted that there aren't any specific rules about the bird, but for good reason—they've never received a complaint. The FCC doesn't monitor shows, they only investigate documented complaints. Apparently, no one's gotten worked up enough to force the government into action.

But beware: FCC employees are themselves allowed to file complaints, since they're part of the general viewing audience. Could an anti-finger zealot inside the government try to ban our fleshy friend? This hasn't happened yet, but change is in the wind. A May 1998 episode of **ABC**'s *NYPD Blue* revealed the bird in all its splendor. Are more fingers forthcoming on network TV? Maybe, but not if you're only watching *Sabrina, The Teenage Witch.*



FINGERBALL

THE FINGER IN SPORTS

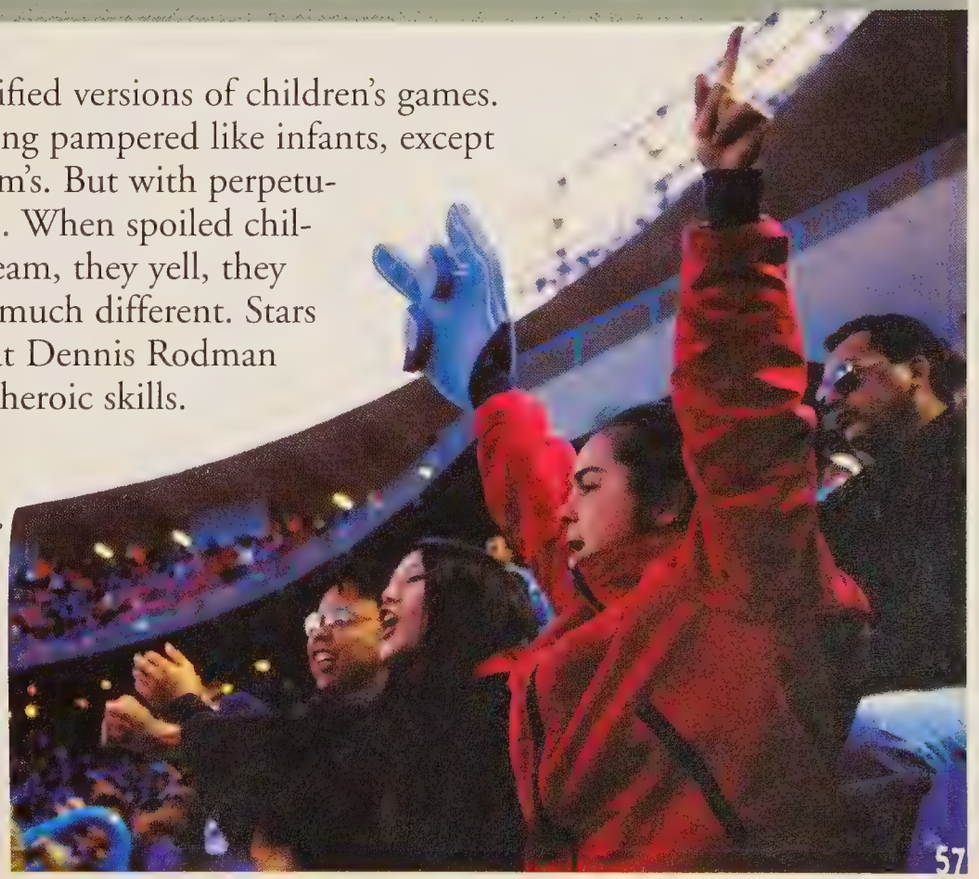
After giving up 9 runs and 13 hits in 4 innings in one game in 1995, pinstriped pitcher **Jack McDowell**, aka **The Yankee Flipper**, heads for the showers—a shower of boos.

JOE DIMAGGIO, a baseball player known for his grace and charm, was called **The Yankee Clipper**, a dignified nickname paying homage to his habit of "clipping" the ball out of the park. Flash forward to 1995, when angry Bronx pitcher Jack MacDowell found himself dubbed **The Yankee Flipper** for flipping off the fans. Has the dignity of professional sports hit rock bottom, or have fans and players alike finally come to terms with the competitive bloodlust behind the games? No doubt it's the latter. When Charles "Old Hoss" Radbourn snuck his middle finger into a team picture way back in 1886 (see the *History* chapter), he was merely paving the way for things to come. **Things like Mike Tyson, and his insatiable hunger for the human ear.** It just took the rest of the world a hundred or so years to catch up.

During a tennis tournament in 1981, **Billie Jean King** power serves an irate finger to a fan who heckled her about an admitted lesbian affair. Game, set, and match.

Professional athletes make tons of money playing glorified versions of children's games. Successful athletes lead gloriously irresponsible lives, getting pampered like infants, except they suck on George Steinbrenner's nipple instead of Mom's. But with perpetual childhood there comes a downside: perpetual tantrums. When spoiled children don't get what they want, they throw a fit. They scream, they yell, they kick holes through their bedroom walls. Athletes are not much different. Stars ranging from tennis pro John McEnroe to basketball great Dennis Rodman are known equally for their sudden outbursts as for their heroic skills.

But poor sportsmanship—i.e. kicking dirt at an umpire, deliberately fouling an opponent, or spitting on a batboy—is as much a part of the *entertainment spectacle* as the game itself. Sports fans have not only come to expect these tantrums, they pray for 'em. After seven innings of cold nachos and warm Bud Light, what else is going to get you off your bloated ass than the chance to root for a real, live bench-clearing brawl? If sports figures lie down and accept the injustices in their lives, it gives us no hope with ours.



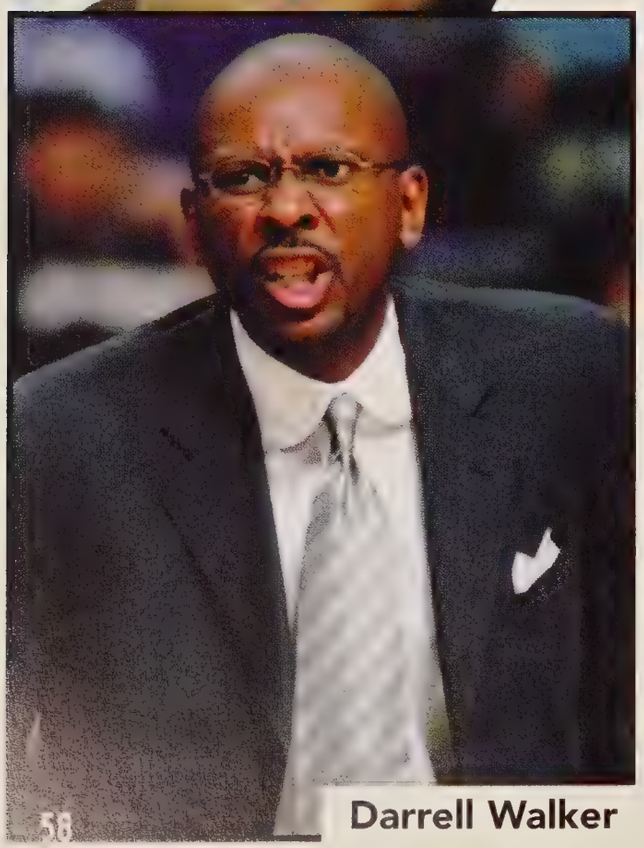
NOT Brian Shaw

One of the most popular ways in which athletes fight the good fight is through the power of the middle finger. How else can you tell someone off in a stadium? Even with the help of a Jumbotron, a mere **fuck you** doesn't travel too well into the bleachers. A middle digit's all you've got—and it can be a lifesaver. In fact, the bird is such a part of professional sports that our national anthem might be called the *Star Spangled Finger.*

Take 1997, for example. It was a typical year in sports, with respect to both conquering and controversy. Let's look at a few of America's most popular games and see how some of our favorite players expressed their anger, fear, and outrage via carrier bird:

1997 BASKETBALL FINGER SHOTS

PLAYER: Brian Shaw
TEAM: Orlando Magic
WHAT: In April, after the Magic lost to the Philadelphia 76'ers 105-93, the team found themselves hassled by a fan as they walked off the court. Shaw, a guard for the Magic (which is a strange and grammatically awkward name for a sports team), blew his stack, and flipped the fan a dreaded two-fisted finger salute.
REPERCUSSIONS: Shaw was fined $2,000. He later issued a semi-apology, admitting he lost his head, and wanted to move on.
ANALYSIS: It's probable his antagonist didn't move on, and spent the rest of the season heckling in the privacy of his own living room.

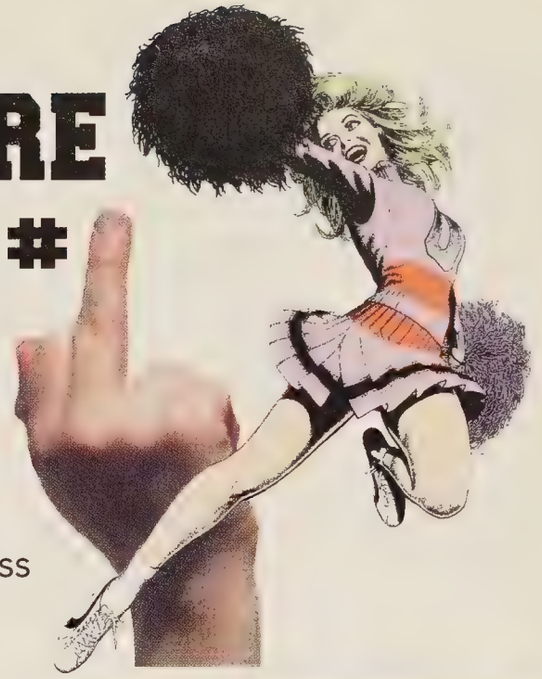


Darrell Walker

COACH: Darrell Walker
TEAM: Toronto Raptors
WHAT: As a December game with Utah wore on, Raptors' coach Darrell Walker found the team headed toward their fourteenth consecutive loss, bringing their season record to a dismal 1-16. Rather than refund his season tickets, one particular fan decided to heckle the Toronto team for the duration of the game. Apparently, a final (and unnamed) verbal obscenity caused Walker to lose his temper, drawing his skin-sword as the team entered the locker room.
REPERCUSSIONS: After catching Walker's bird on-camera, NBA Senior VP, Rod Thorn, fined him $5,000.
ADDITIONAL INFO: Other fans sitting near the abusive guy were reportedly laughing at his obscenity prior to Walker's outburst.
ANALYSIS: Some people just can't take a joke, particularly if their well-paid job is in considerable jeopardy.

1997 BASEBALL FINGER SLAMS

PLAYER: Albert Belle
TEAM: Chicago White Sox
WHAT: In June, Belle, an ex-Cleveland Indian who'd just signed a multi-million dollar deal with the Chicago White Sox, got into trouble when the Sox squared off against his old home team. Rowdy fans booed and threw garbage onto the field throughout the game, which had to be stopped twice to clean it up. Angered, Belle raised his little pennant after the last out.
REPERCUSSIONS: Fined $5,000 by the American League. The league stipulated that Belle use the money on White Sox tickets to be distributed to Chicago's disadvantaged youth. (Because when you're a homeless orphan, what could be better than a baseball game?)
ADDITIONAL INFO: Belle was previously suspended in 1991 for throwing a ball at a fan who'd taunted him, and in 1989 and '90 for charging the mound. In 1994, he was tossed out for seven games for using a corked bat, and in 1996, he was fined $25,000 for striking Fernando Vina of the Milwaukee Brewers with his forearm.
ANALYSIS: If Belle were still in high school, it's likely he'd be serving detention well into his eighties.

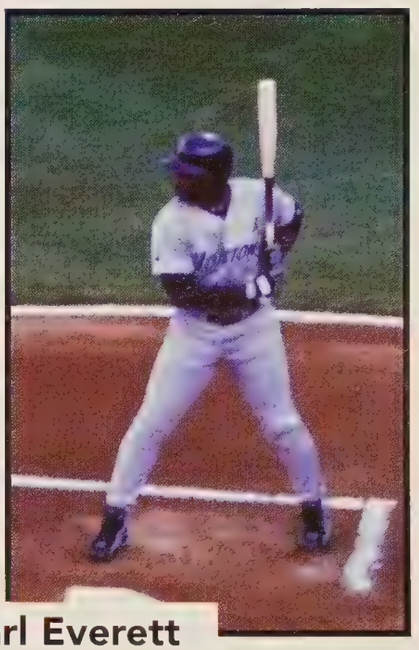


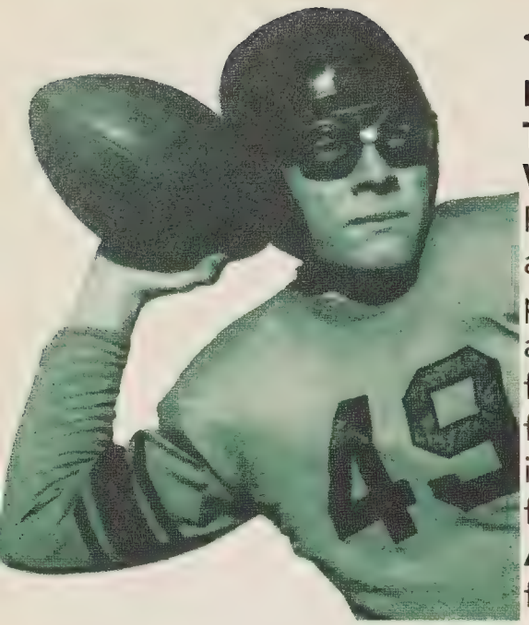
FINGER FACT:
Rollie Fingers, former pitcher for the San Diego Padres, had a waxy handlebar mustache and was known for his sinkerball.

PLAYER: Carl Everett
TEAM: New York Mets
WHAT: After striking out in his first three at-bats during a September game against the Atlanta Braves, outfielder Everett came up for a fourth shot—and popped a fly. Everett yelled at the home-plate umpire, who ejected him from the game. The two men proceeded to engage in baseball's traditional face-to-face screaming match, despite the fact that screaming at such a close distance is highly illogical. Before the Mets' manager could intervene, Everett swung his own personal Louisville Slugger.
REPERCUSSIONS: National League President, Leonard Coleman, slapped Everett with a one-game suspension and an undisclosed fine.
ANALYSIS: Flipping off the ump is not the best idea.

FINGER FACT:
Detroit Tigers pitcher Mark Fydrich, rookie of the year in 1976, was affectionately nicknamed *"The Bird"* for his long, lanky appearance.

FINGER FACT:
Larry Bird is the only white superstar basketball player we can name.


Carl Everett

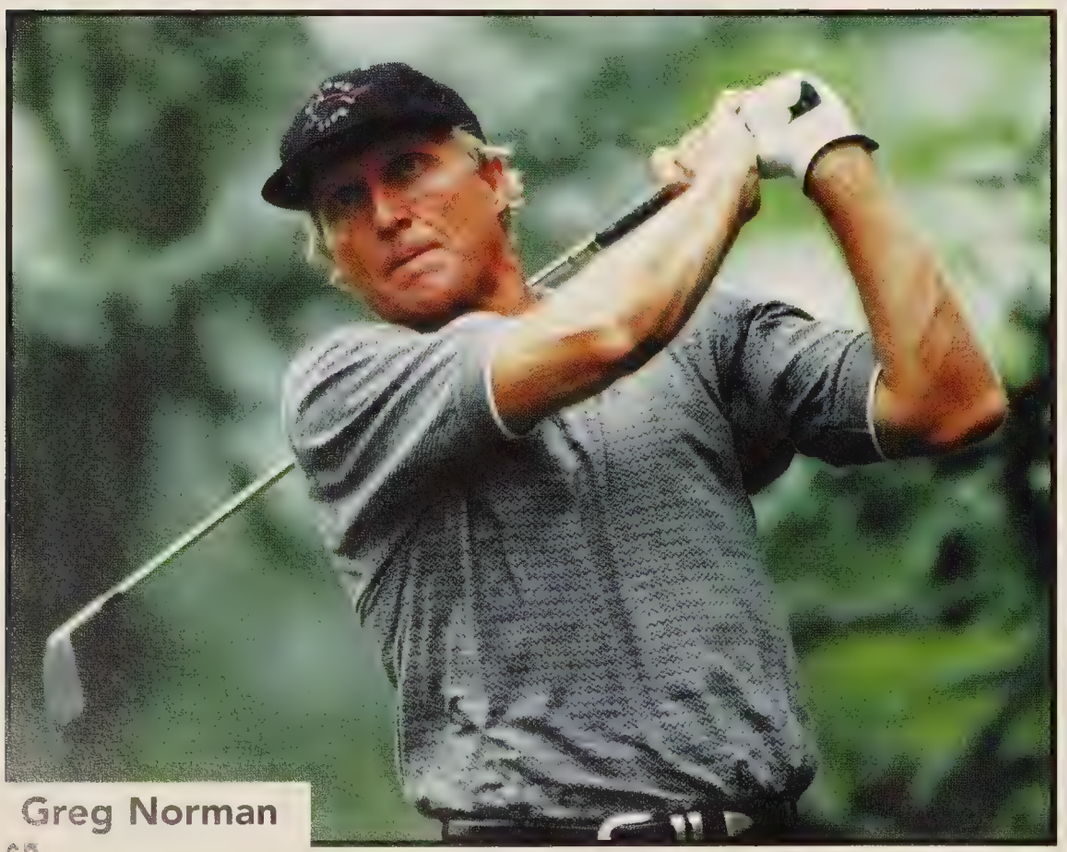


1997 FOOTBALL FINGER FUMBLES

PLAYER: Bryan Cox
TEAM: Chicago Bears
WHAT: Cox filed suit against the NFL and commissioner Paul Tagliabue in May as a response to the league's past actions toward him. In 1996, the NFL had fined Cox a whopping $85,000 for making his so-called "obscene gesture" to a league official. Previously, Cox was fined (in 1994) for flipping the bird in response to racial remarks uttered by fans. At that time, Cox filed a lawsuit in New York, charging that the NFL "failed to maintain a work environment free from racial harassment."
ANALYSIS: If the NFL can slap Cox with an $85,000 fine, then professional athletes make too much money.

1997 GOLF FLIP OFFS

PLAYER: Greg Norman
WHAT: During the 1997 Kemper Open, Norman swung his fleshy nine-iron at a fan whom he believed said "chunk it in the water." Allegedly, the fan actually said "chum in the water."
REPERCUSSIONS: None, although Norman denied he raised the offending finger.
ANALYSIS: Golf is so boring Norman ought to be thanked for injecting some life into it—even if he did get pissed off at something incomprehensible.

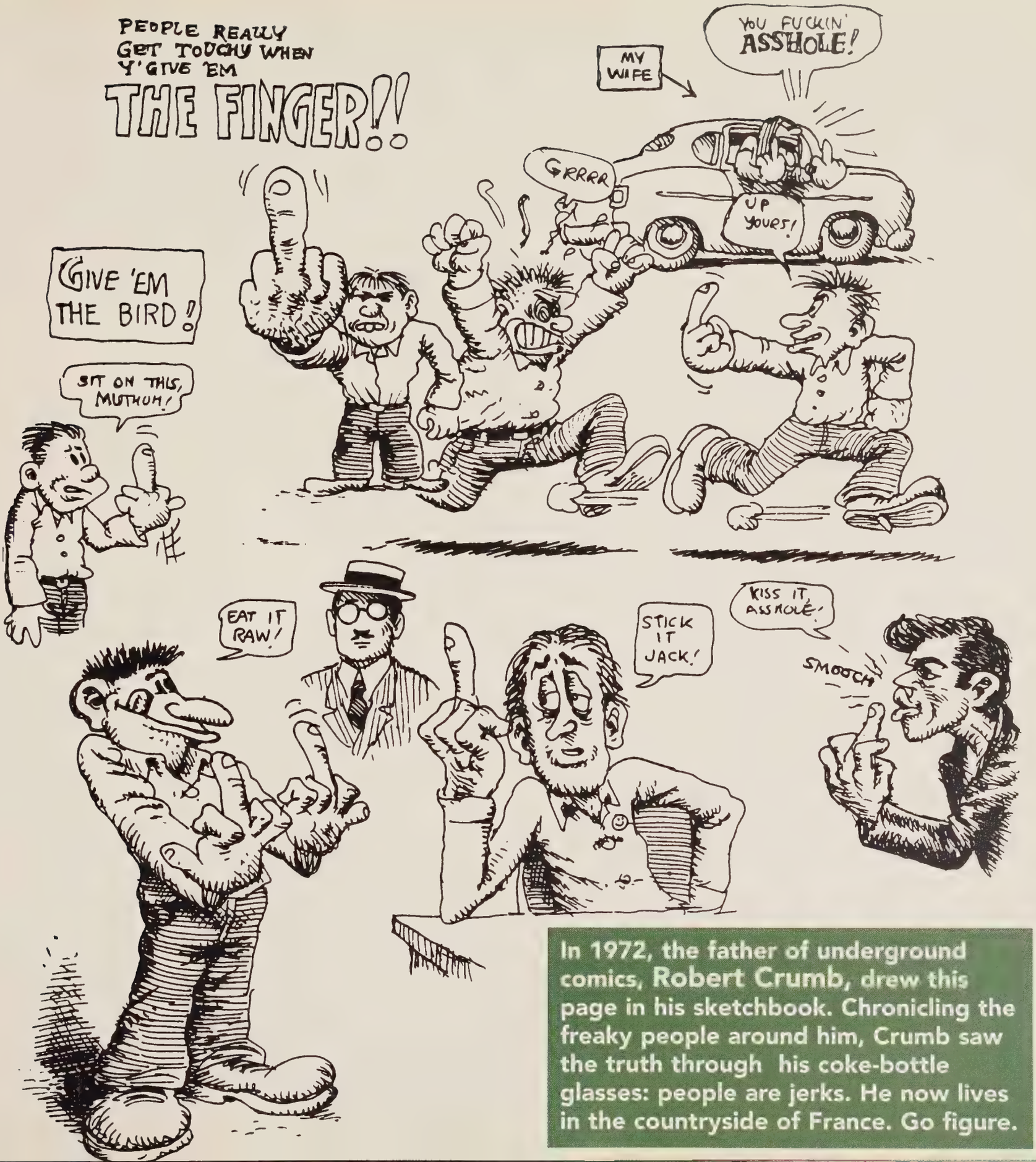


Greg Norman

It all goes to show there's no such thing as a "gentlemen's game." Not now, and not ever. The Roman Gladiators weren't a delicate bunch, and anyone whacking a hockey puck isn't much for manners, either. Sports and the finger make a logical combination, even without the testosterone. Just ask Billie Jean King.

The next time you're home watching a game, and you see your favorite athlete hoisting his bone-banner, take a moment to honor "Old Hoss" Radbourn. With just one tricky digit, Hoss broke down societal boundaries, making him the Jackie Robinson of bird-flipping sports heroes everywhere.

Cheer leader using a megaphone



In 1972, the father of underground comics, **Robert Crumb**, drew this page in his sketchbook. Chronicling the freaky people around him, Crumb saw the truth through his coke-bottle glasses: people are jerks. He now lives in the countryside of France. Go figure.

Cooks are usually mild-mannered pansies, but these recipes will prove that you're no *Frugal Gourmet*—you're the *Fuck You Fry Cook*.

Finger Food

Christmas Finger Cookies

The holidays normally blow wads of red and green chunks in a foul-smelling spray of good intentions. But you can only stand there swallowing "peace on earth" for so long. It's time to face facts: your family's a mess. Your mother's a transsexual, your father is obsessed with magic tricks, and Gramps just smiles as he shoves pudding down his pants. Show your dysfunctional relatives how much you hate them with this colorful batch of finger snacks.

This extra fattening recipe makes a batch of about twenty medium sized cookies, or ten sweat-inducing, artery clogging ones.

Here's what you'll need:

1 cup butter (unsalted, soften before you begin)
1/2 cup sifted confectioner's sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon pure peppermint extract
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
Red and green food colors

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and peppermint extracts. Stir in flour and salt. Divide into two parts. Color one part with 15-18 drops of red food coloring until you have a good Injun flesh tone. If you're not Native American, try mixing red, blue, and yellow to create your own pigment preference. Color the other one with 8-10 drops of green for a good Hulk-like tone.

Chill the dough for about 1/2 hour. In the meantime, pull out your cookie sheets, lightly grease them up, and preheat your oven to 375°F.

1) Roll a middle finger to the length of about two digits and thickness of your own finger and lay on the cookie sheet.
2) Then roll a thumb section of about twice that length, folding over one end and flattening to create a palm. Lay the palm and thumb section across the bottom of the middle finger, making a lop-sided upside down T.
3) Next, make an index finger to length and scale of the middle finger and set it in its place. Ditto for the other two fingers.
4) Bend the thumb into position over the index finger.
5) Add fingernails of a different color and viola! You have a full-fledged *digitus cookius.*

Bake at 375° for about 8-9 minutes. Remove them from the cookie sheet and cool for 1/2 hour. Serve on a cold plate with a smirk.

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Lady Fingers

Lady fingers are fluffy morsels of class, sophistication, and flour all rolled into one. Unfortunately, they're a royal pain in the ass to make. And, contrary to popular belief, **Ladyfingers are not normally made with the digits of impressionable young women.** But after slaving away at these things for hours, you may just want to grab a sharp knife, a pot of boiling oil, a willing girl, and call it an evening.

3 eggs
1/3 cup powdered sugar
1/3 cup cake flour
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
A jar of your favorite preserves

Add salt to powdered sugar, sift once, and set aside. Sift cake flour once before measuring, and keep 1/3 cup. Sift that 1/3 cup of flour once again, and set aside. Separate two eggs and set aside. In one mixing bowl, combine one whole egg, two egg yolks, the sugar/salt and the vanilla. Beat until thick and bright yellow. Add the flour, and beat until mixed thoroughly (should be very thick). In a separate mixing bowl, with your cleaned and dried beater, whip 2 egg whites until stiff but not dry. Gently fold in 1/4 of the egg whites into the yolk mixture, then fold in 1/4 more and so on, until all the whites are mixed in well. Don't over-mix or your precious fluffy whites will fall.

Using a pastry tube, make finger-shaped strips (3-4 inches long and not very wide) on very lightly greased and floured baking sheets. If you have the proper molds, drop the mixture into them. Bake at 325° for 12 to 16 min. till golden. Before they are fully cooled, dust the tops lightly with powdered sugar. If particularly bitter toward guests, add arsenic to taste.* Makes 20 cookies.

*ARSENIC IS A POISON. IF YOU USE ENOUGH TO TASTE, AND TASTE IT, YOU'LL KILL YOURSELF. AS A RESULT, OUR LAWYERS SAY WE CAN ONLY RECOMMEND THIS LAST INGREDIENT AS AN OPTION FOR THE TERMINALLY ILL LOOKING FOR A TREAT TO WRAP UP AN OTHERWISE FULFILLING LIFE.

Finger Fact:
The common name for the cactus *Echinocereus Pentalophus* is a "Lady Finger."

Chicken Fingers

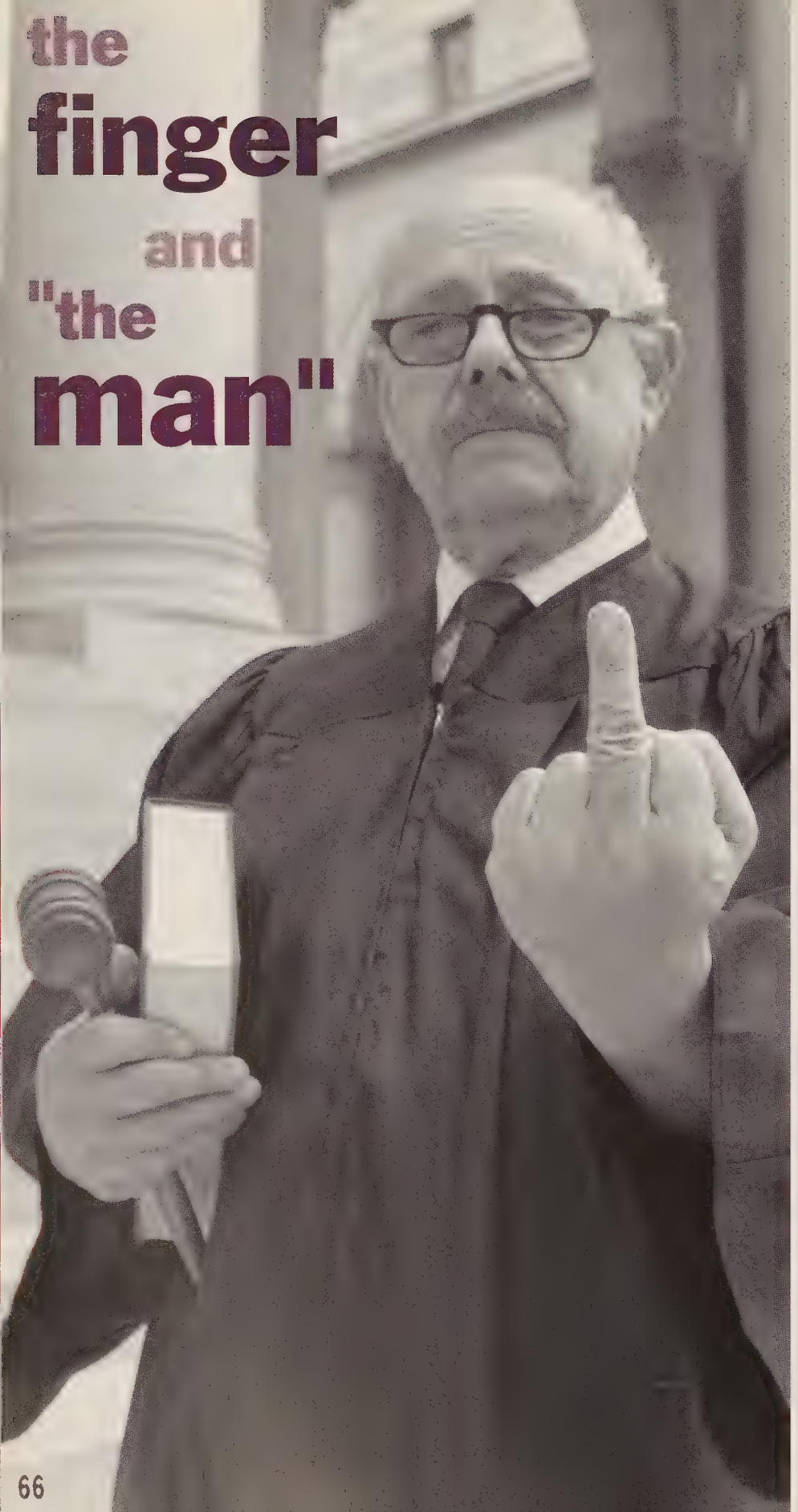
Chicken Fingers are as American as apple pie and obesity. The French stuff their poultry with ham and cheese, and the Russians coat 'em with beets and bury them in the tundra for a week, but we Yanks like to throw on some stale corn flakes and fry it all up in a pan! Cook this and flip off your favorite culinary snobs. Why is this recipe in the book? We're not really sure.

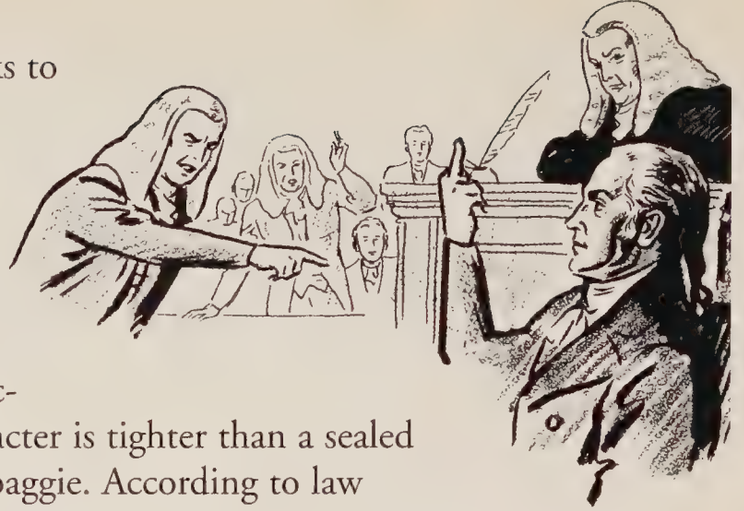
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 2 1/2 tablespoons plain lowfat yogurt
- 18 stoned wheat thins (or any cracker)—crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon dried marjoram
- 1/4 teaspoon curry powder

Cut each breast into 6 even strips. Coat chicken pieces with yogurt. Combine cracker crumbs, thyme, marjoram and curry. Roll chicken strips in crumbs. Place chicken in single layer on cake rack, set in baking pan. Bake at 375° F for 25 minutes or until crumbs are lightly browned and crisp. Remove from oven. For a dip, use your favorite marinara sauce or the blood of a virgin sacrifice.

Finger Fact:
Alan Parker's 1984 movie *Birdy* stars Matthew Modine as a man who thinks he's a bird (not a chicken).

the finger and "the man"





Thanks to the Puritan heritage of this great nation, our collective sphincter is tighter than a sealed Ziplock baggie. According to law books, anything said to arouse one's "*prurient interests*"—meaning sexual, sensual, and possibly *perverse*—can be labeled ***obscene***, as in "*dirty, wrong,* ***the kind of thing that sends you straight to hell.***" Frighteningly, so-called *obscene* behavior or material is not always protected by the First Amendment. "**Oh, no!**" you gasp. "**What does this mean for the finger?**"

Before we turn our eye to nature's most popular gesture, let's review some landmark court cases in American history. With 1957's **Roth vs. United States**, the Supreme Court determined the litmus test for obscenity which is still applicable today. We can thank Roth (and it wasn't David Lee or Philip) for the mush-mouthed phrase "**prurient interests.**" As written in the case, if applying "current community standards," an average person found that his or her *prurient interests* were aroused, well, wham-bam-thank you, Roth—you'd have obscenity.

In 1973, the Supreme Court further defined obscenity using **Miller v. California**, which states that an ***obscene*** work must depict or describe *"in a patently offensive way"* sexual conduct specifically defined by respective state laws, and that the material, taken as a whole, must lack "*serious artistic, political, or scientific value.*" If a party can actually prove something is obscene, then that obscenity is not protected by constitutional guarantee, and would be subject to respective state laws. But *proving* obscenity is about as easy as making a rabid dog swallow a horse-sized pill.

Larry Flynt, paraplegic publisher of **Hustler Magazine**, knows these court cases well—they've saved his ass a number of times. (Although I'd say his magazine is scientific. Read enough *Hustler* and you're on your way to a **Ph.D. in Vagina**.) But it's not just pornographers who benefit from these obscenity laws. **You**, my friend—upstanding citizen and innocent flipper of the bird—will find that your own hide can be kept out of the slammer, courtesy of some primo legalese.

Many cases in several different states (Maine, Connecticut, and Colorado, to name a few), detail incidents where people were charged with disorderly conduct for the purported *obscenity* of giving the finger. What's the common thread among these cases? Cops and cars. Incidents usually revolve around a bold motorist hoisting his or her dirty digit at an ill-humored **Duly Deputized Agent Of The Law**. Lesson #1: Don't flick off Barney Fife.

In the 1977 finger case **Connecticut v. Anonymous**, a high school student had flipped off a state trooper parked behind his school bus at an intersection. After the bus' red lights stopped flashing, the trooper turned on his siren, pulled the bus over, boarded, and arrested the defendant.

The Connecticut Appellate Court ruled that "*the finger*" is a neutral act that earns meaning only from the ideas it expresses, and that while it might be out of the bounds of constitutional speech when directed against someone, it is not obscene because (as outlined in **Miller**) it is unerotic, does not appeal to prurient interests, nor does it depict sexual intercourse in a *"patently offensive way."* While the defendant's act may have pissed off the state trooper, it probably didn't arouse his sexual desire. Had the trooper been particularly kinky, the teenager might still be locked up.

A similar case from three years earlier, **Maine v. Drake**, also debated the legality of the bird, though not as succinctly. In this 1974 incident, defendant Drake was charged with violating Maine's disorderly conduct statute for (yet again) waving his magic skin-wand at a police officer. Here, the judge maintained that the finger, by itself, is essentially meaningless. In private and among friends, the court

FINGER FACT:
"A fish-and-finger pie," whatever the hell that means, is mentioned in the Beatles' song Penny Lane.

BAD FROG BEER

Why are frog mascots always so jolly? There's Jim Henson's lovable **Kermit**, the "dubba-dubba-dubba-u-b" frog from the **Warner Bros.** TV network, and even those accident-prone, burping **Budweiser** guys. In reality, frogs are slimy, warty amphibians who are eaten in France, clubbed in Korea, and dissected by pimply teens all across America. They really don't have much to be happy about.

Enter **BAD FROG BEER**. This Michigan-based brew put forth a challenge to that sunny stereotype. Bad Frog's mascot is a badass amphibian, who appears on their labels flipping his webbed middle digit high in the air. Not that it hasn't gotten him into hot water.

It took the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn the New York State Liquor Authority's ban on selling Bad Frog beer. A lower court had previously upheld the ban, stating that the label's artwork was *"patently offensive"* and *"presumably a suggestion to have intercourse with oneself."* Or with a frog.

The Second Circuit determined that Bad Frog's label wasn't obscene, but actually just a trademark for their product—and therefore qualified as free speech under the U.S. Constitution. (Bad Frog even applied for a patent to copyright "the bird" for their exclusive commercial use.) In support of Bad Frog's case, the court cited the finger's dubious, yet true history throughout the ages, much of which can be found in this very book.

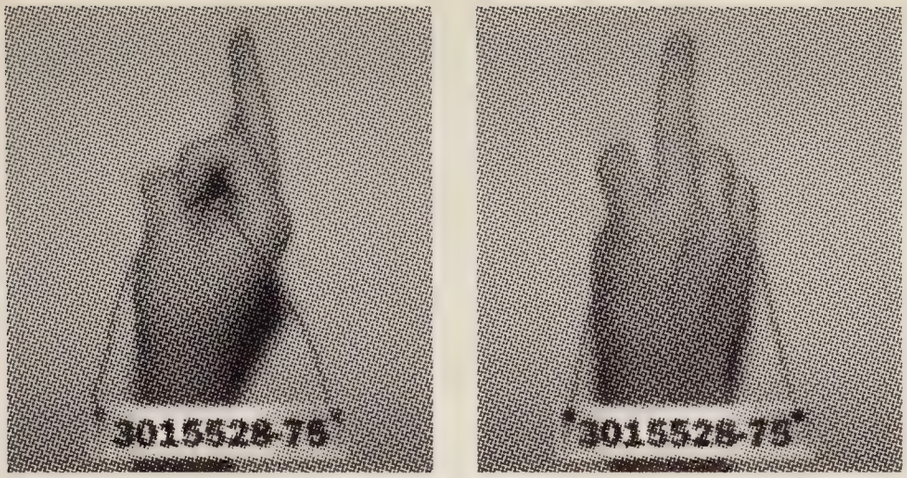
Bad Frog's makers currently distribute their beer in over 25 states and overseas to frog-friendly countries like New Zealand. According to a company press release, the best way to order Bad Frog in a bar is to **flip off your waitress** (*"flip the bird,* ***get a frog!***"). Maybe, although you run the risk of having the bottle smashed over your head.

For more information, visit their website at **www.badfrog.com**, or even one of their new franchised pubs.

wrote, the finger could be met with "good humored acceptance" while in other social situations, it could get people pretty upset. The court upheld that such a finger might constitute disorderly conduct on some occasions, yet not on others. **Good thing this book is a veritable love-in of fingers, or we might never be allowed to order from L.L. Bean again.**

The Maine Court added a footnote to the case, stating that "even *crudity of expression* may be constitutionally protected." However, they acknowledged that some speech (and in this case, gestures) alleged to be abusive MIGHT go beyond the constitution if they equated "fighting words." (For this, the court cited a 1942 U.S. Supreme Court case, **Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire**.) To be considered "fighting words," the essential facts and circumstances in which an offense took place must be proven to an objective jury. Something to consider in an age when Howard Stern battles multi-million dollar FCC fines on account of his supposed *offenses.*

Perhaps the most interesting finger case of all, **Texas v. Rivenburgh**, took place in 1996. Rivenburgh, prosecuted



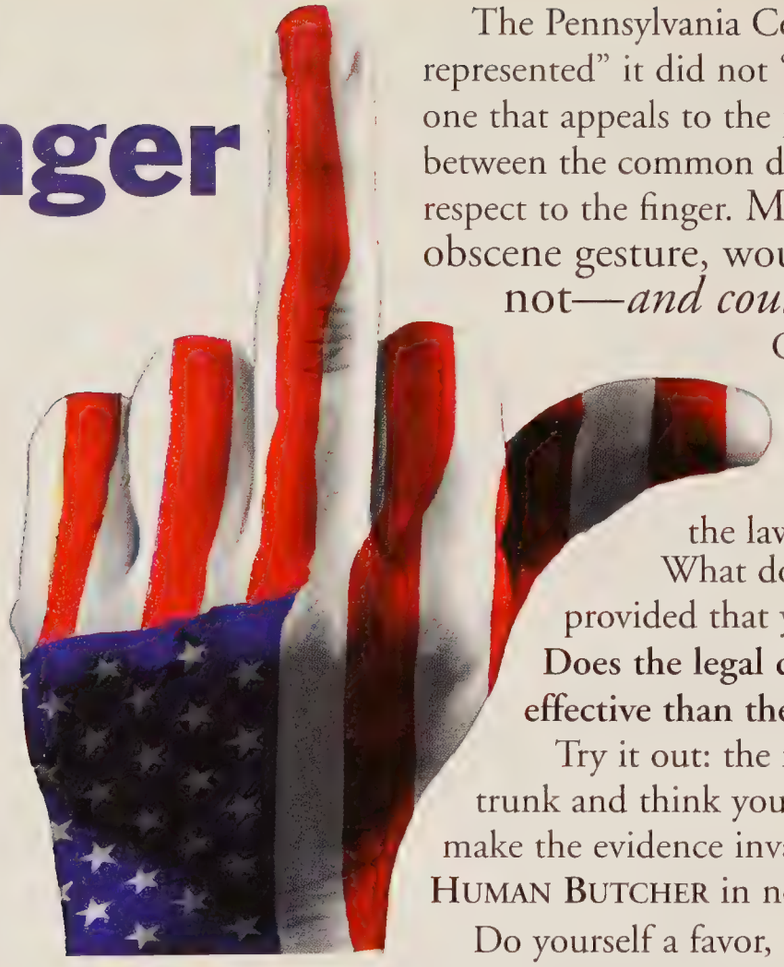
for driving while intoxicated, first was charged with disorderly conduct for flipping the bird on a public street. Apparently, a traffic light had turned green, but Rivenburgh's car remained stopped in the intersection. When other motorists on the road began to honk, Rivenburgh gave the finger and mouthed profanity at the car behind her. The arresting officer believed Rivenburgh's finger could potentially incite violence and/or criminal mischief, so he booked her. Rivenburgh was subsequently found to be DWI.

Rivenburgh wanted all her DWI evidence suppressed—on the condition that the stop for disorderly conduct was made without probable cause. The court ruled in her favor, stating that in order to uphold the charge, her finger would have to equate—you got it—"fighting words." Since the arresting officer was the scene's only witness, no one could prove Rivenburgh's gesture breached the peace, so the evidence was suppressed.

I WANT YOU TO FUCK OFF!

In another case from 1996, **Brockway v. Shepherd**, a vehicle passenger had been prosecuted for disorderly conduct when he flipped the bird to a police officer. No explanation was given for Brockway's finger, but none was necessary, he charged in his suit 13 years later: the finger is not grounds for disorderly conduct. Although the suit was dismissed, it was because the officer received immunity from the Pennsylvania Court, not because the finger was considered obscene.

the finger is legal



The Pennsylvania Court went on to write that although "a base term for sex is represented" it did not "change the disrespectful, offensive communication into one that appeals to the prurient interests." However, the court found a discrepancy between the common definition of "obscene" and the legal one, at least with respect to the finger. Most civilians, if asked to give an example of an obscene gesture, would cite the bird. But most lawmakers would not—*and could not.* Problems occur because many U.S. states (such as Connecticut and Arkansas) list an "obscene" gesture as grounds for disorderly conduct. People confuse *offensive* with ***obscene***. Fortunately, it's nearly impossible to prove the finger is either one. So flipping the bird is above the law—just like Steven Seagal.

What does this mean? Can you legally drive as drunk as you want, provided that you actually get stopped for something far more stupid? **Does the legal dilemma of the finger make a *Bird Defense* even more effective than the infamous *Twinkie Defense*?** Apparently so.

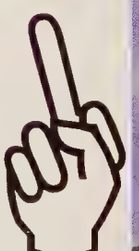
Try it out: the next time you have a crate of defrosting body parts in your trunk and think you're about to get busted, give a cop the finger. Get arrested, make the evidence invalid, and you'll be free to continue your career as SAM THE HUMAN BUTCHER in no time.

Do yourself a favor, though, and cover your ass. Due to the shaky grounds of "obscenity" and the discrepancies between state laws, **we may someday find our beloved bird on the endangered species list. Write to your Congressman and demand a special law protecting your fleshy First Amendment rights!**

CLIP AND SEND TO WASHINGTON D.C.

Dear Congressional Chairperson:

I want to keep "THE FINGER" legal. Make a law! Flipping the bird is one of our premiere constitutional rights, and I want to keep it that way!



_____
(Your Name Here)

☐ **GREASE THE MACHINE**
Check box if "contribution" (CASH BRIBE) is enclosed.
List Amount: _____

CLIP 'N SEND TO:
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 RHOB
Washington, DC 20515

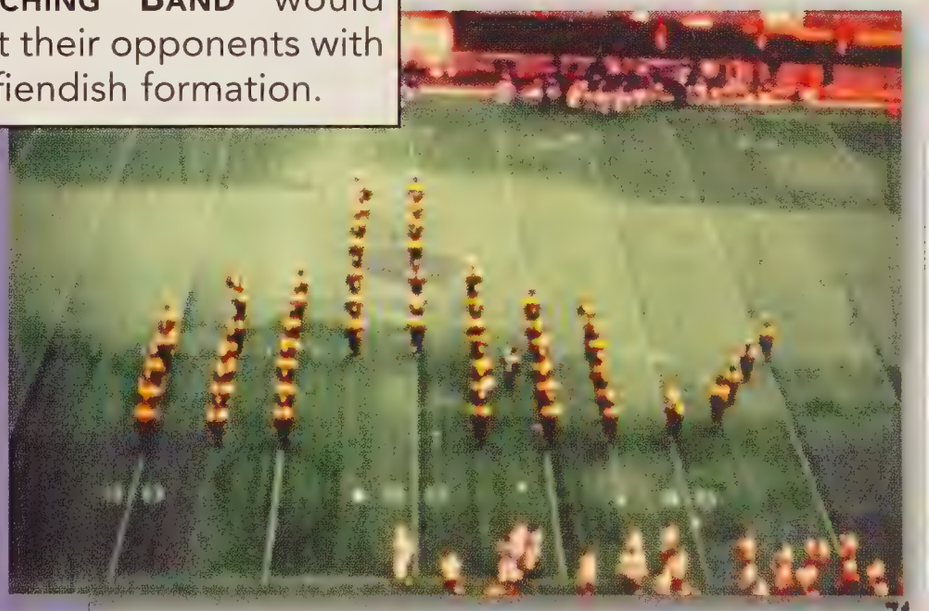
Objects d'Finger

The little buggers in your garden are pissed. The **Angriest Lawn Gnome** is the official mascot of the ***Mouvement d' Emancipation des Nais de Jardin*** (*Free the Lawn Gnomes!*), a political movement headquartered at www.menj.com. Unfortunately for American gnomes, it's all in French.

The **Stump Finger** was carved from a wood stump with a chainsaw by an unknown artisan.

High atop the Belli law offices in San Francisco, **The Golden Finger of Justice** weighed in with its opinion of the legal system. Unfortunately, due to a changing political climate, it's gone.

In the early '70s, a major west coast university **Marching Band** would taunt their opponents with this fiendish formation.



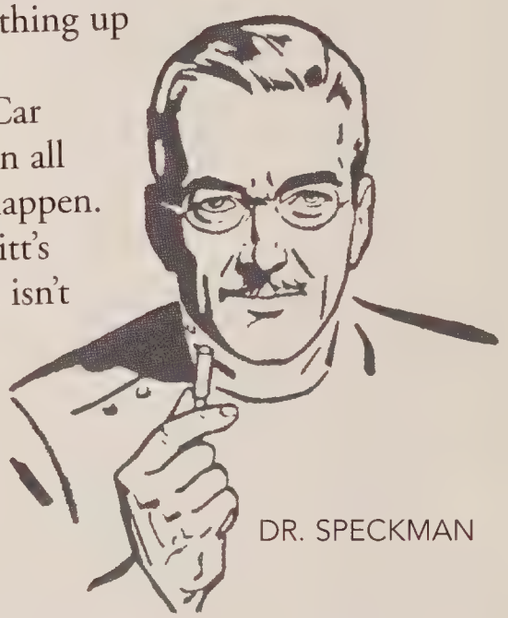
Ways To Lose Your Finger

Most people don't realize that giving the finger triggers a complicated, sometimes dangerous mechanical process in the body. It's hard to believe anything could go wrong after the flip of a successful bird, but this extreme extremity is vulnerable to a cornucopia of maladies. An evil bacteria, an inflamed joint, even a speeding train can all put an early end to a promising finger-flipping career.

What if you woke up one morning and your middle finger had fallen off your hand? Like most people, you'd probably scream, "Ouch!," pick the thing up off the floor and run to the hospital.

Amputation is one of the most common digital dangers. Car doors, axes, firecrackers, cotton gins, and five-ton boulders can all pulverize your significant signifier into a fleshy pulp. It can happen.

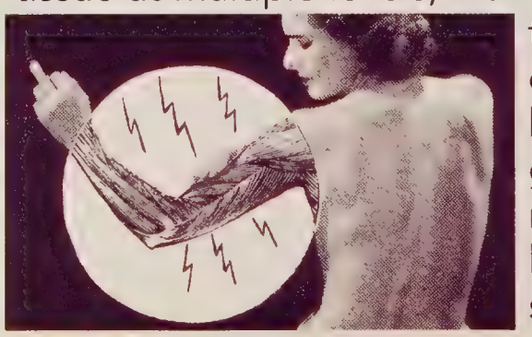
Don't worry, though. If they can turn John Wayne Bobbitt's cast-off wiener into a porno star, sewing your finger back on isn't such a big deal. Before emergency personnel arrive on the scene, try to keep the finger moist. If you can't find water, use anything you can find—contact lens fluid, a mud puddle, even a frothy soft drink can keep it fresh and carbonated. Avoid using a tourniquet on the stump, as the resulting nerve damage may make reattachment impossible.



DR. SPECKMAN

Snowblower Warning

Every winter, people get frustrated when wet snow clogs up their snowblowing machines. Unable to resist, they poke their fingers down the running machine—one capable of mangling tissue beyond repair. The snowblower's blades naturally crush and tear the tissue at multiple levels, making salvage of the damaged digits difficult at best. We suggest giving a neighborhood kid $10 to shovel instead.

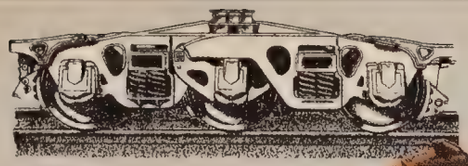


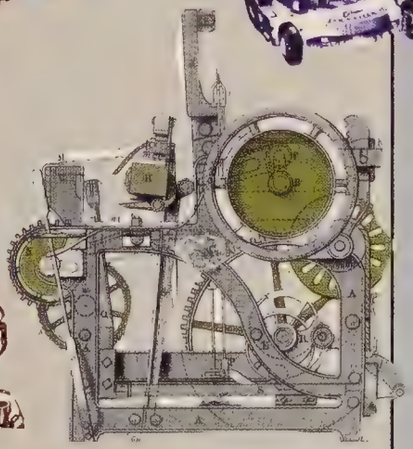
Exercise Bikes Rip Off Fingers!

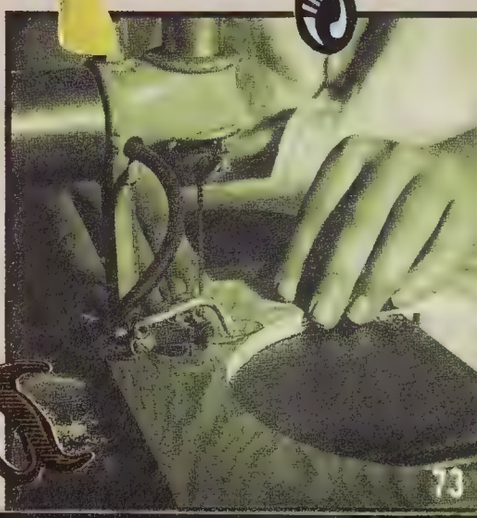
The **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission** estimates that between 1985-1989, 1,200 amputations of children's fingers occurred due to improper contact with exercise bikes. Most of these children were under the age of five, and had touched a moving bike wheel or chain and sprocket assembly. Granted, not all of these amputations were middle fingers, but if you have a child and the urge to exercise on a bike—**DON'T DO IT IN THE HOUSE!** Go outside and ride a regular bicycle the way God intended.

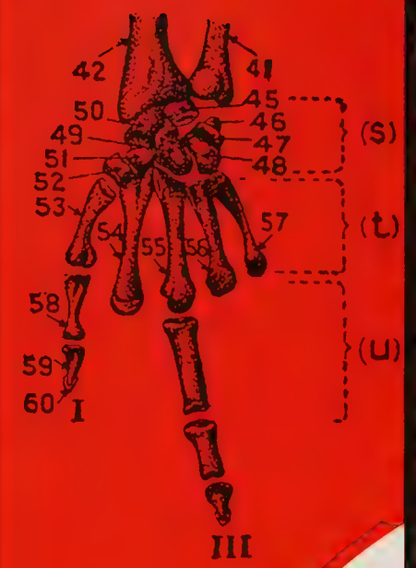
42 Ways To LOSE Your MIDDLE FINGER

AXE
ARTHRITIS
FIRE, OR EXTREME HEAT
GUNSHOT
HAYBALER
GRAIN AUGER
BLASTED OFF BY NUCLEAR EXPLOSION
EATEN BY WILD ANIMAL
FROZEN OFF
ROTTED OFF
GARDENING SHEARS
CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME
INFECTED PAPER CUT
KNIFE
FAST MOVING FAN BLADE
OVERZEALOUS SEWING MACHINE
SLAMMING CAR DOOR
RUN OVER BY A CIRCUS WAGON
MEAT PACKING PLANT
GIANT ROCK
BOARD PLANER OR CIRCULAR SAW
LAWNMOWER
GARBAGE DISPOSAL
CHAINSAW
CAUGHT IN A FREIGHT TRAIN'S WHEELS
TETNUS, LEPROSY, OR GANGRENE
BEND IT TOO FAR BACK
PAPER SHREDDER
POKED TOO FAR IN SOMEONE'S EYE
BUTANE LIGHTER EXPLOSION
MALARIAL MOSQUITO SWARM
ICE SKATING ACCIDENT
FAULTY GUILLOTINE
METALLIC CHINESE FINGER TRAP
HANGING OUTSIDE THE CAR ON A ROLLERCOASTER
BITTEN BY UNDEAD ZOMBIE
MERCURY POISONING
JUST CAN'T FIND IT









JAMES DOOHAN: Giving His Finger To Hitler

June 7, 1944: A young Canadian officer fearlessly leads a company of men to storm Normandy beach under a hail of gunfire. After overrunning German positions and personally dispatching two Nazi snipers, the man future generations would know as **Scotty**, the **USS Enterprise's** trusty Engineer, is ambushed. Before he can beam himself out of trouble, **his body is riddled by machine gun bullets**.

Luckily for countless Trekkies around the world, the faux-Scotsman was down, but not out. His only serious injury was to the middle finger to his right hand. Deciding he "canna take it anymore," **doctors amputated what was left of the digit, leaving Scotty one tube short a full bagpipe**.

According to his autobiography, *Beam Me Up, Scotty!*, Jimmy Doohan no longer takes special measures to hide his deficient digit. But working with some of the egos on the Enterprise has no doubt given him many chances to regret its loss.

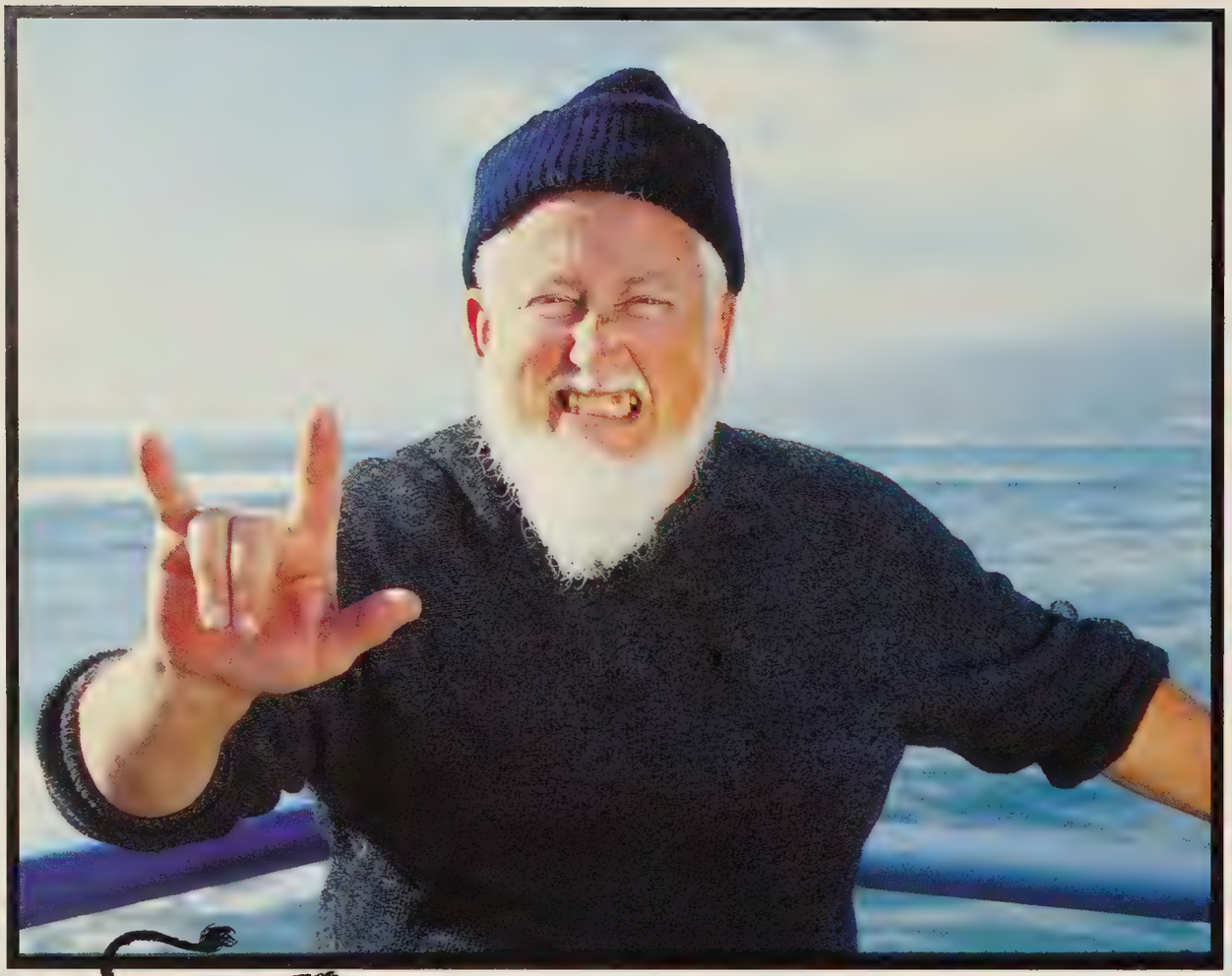
FINGER FACT:
Thanks to generations of inbreeding, the Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania have the highest number of people with six fingers on one hand. These genetic mutants have a difficult time flashing their middle fingers due to simple mathematics.

FOREIGN FINGERS

Foreign lands provide the traveller with a window into new foods, new ideas, and new sexual diseases. But just like back home, there will always be assholes, and you'll need to let them know it. How do you accomplish this task if you can't *sprechen ze* local language? As odd as this may seem, not everyone on planet Earth recognizes the vaunted middle finger as an offensive insult.

If you find yourself on foreign soil, it's always best to know how to enrage your host with a native gesture. Think of this chapter as a Berlitz guide to rotten hand signals around the globe. But beware: flashing these insults in an unenlightened country could land you in the slammer, or send a horde of raging villagers chasing you down a muddy lane, cursing you to their pagan god.

Our Ambassador of Ill-Will, Jack, has been around the world... and he hates it. At each exotic port of call—Jakarta, Zanzibar, Cleveland—he runs into trouble. An opinionated bastard, Jack wanders into taverns, gets drunk, and proclaims that feminist writer Andrea Dworkin is the greatest mind of all time. Salty talk like that can be dangerous, but any would-be misogynist is easily silenced by an obscene gesture and a rusty harpoon in the gut.



HORN SIGN

Gesture: Raised first and fourth finger.
Location: Varied European Old World locations.

This terrible insult, which means, **You are impotent and too stupid to realize your wife is unfaithful,** seems to stem from the bull's horns. But why has the bull, normally a symbol of virility, come to signify a cuckold? Some suggest that the virile horns are shown sarcastically, as in, **My, *what a great big bull* you are!** Most bulls, however, are castrated to make them docile enough for farm work. Perhaps the gesture means you are as flaccid as a domestic bull. Another theory suggests that the man is accused of wearing horns because his wife is as promiscuous as a cow.

Why is this such a deadly insult? In the 17th through the 19th centuries, adulterers were more detested than rapists since they stole away with the romantic hearts as well as the physical bodies of their women. Nowadays, our sentiments are usually reversed. In Catholic countries like Italy, where manhood is prided above all, public use of the horn-sign is still potent. If you are caught in public maliciously "hoisting the *corna,*" as the Italians call it, it can land you six months in the clink. If you do it to an important person, like the Pope or their Prime Minister, you'll get three years.

Inhabitants of the tiny island of Malta, the former Yugoslavia, and other isolated parts of Europe employ this gesture to protect themselves from "the evil eye"—a very potent force. Here in America, the gesture means something more along the lines of

Metallica Rocks!

FINGER FACT:
Other cultures use the finger, but alter its delivery. Modern Greeks hold it sideways, and Arabs point it upside-down.

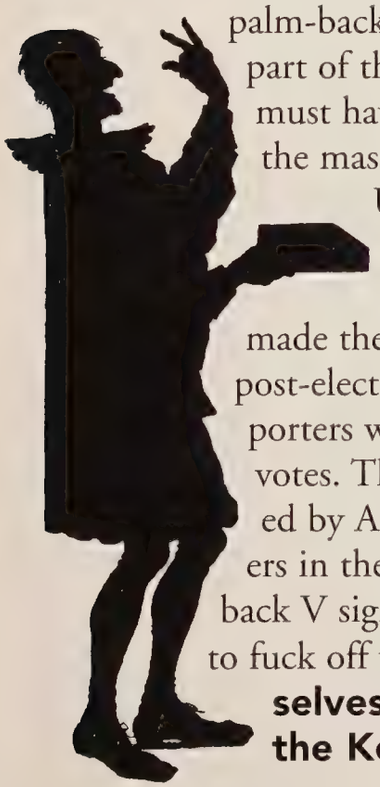
PALM-BACK V SIGN

Gesture: The peace sign, but reversed so the palm faces the gesturer.
Location: England.

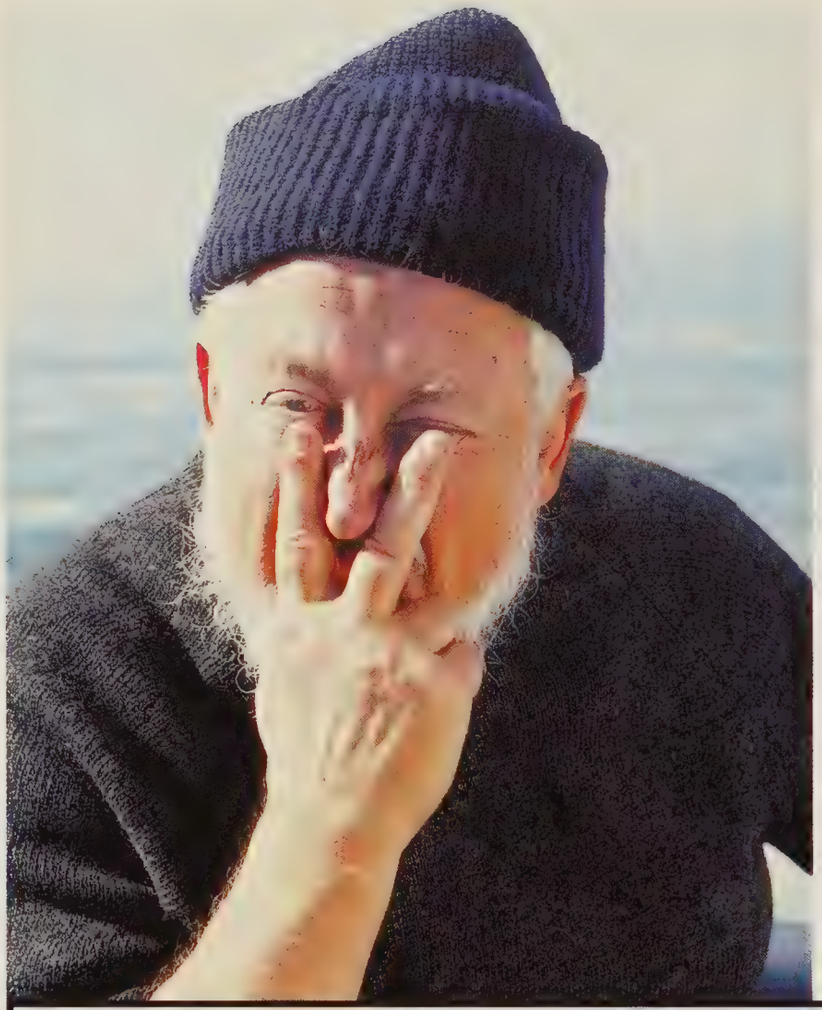
If an American were visiting England and someone flashed him the palm-back V sign, the Yank would probably mutter, **"Damn Hippies!"** Yet this Brit wasn't offering a symbol of peace, but in fact telling the American to go bugger himself.

In the British Isles, the palm-back V sign has the same meaning as the finger, but with a Cockney accent. Its use can be traced back to the 18th century; no one knows exactly how or why it came into use. It could be a variant of the cuckold's devil's horns, the arab nose jerk or a two-pronged offshoot of the more ancient middle finger—but with an extra finger thrown in to make the penetration that much more painful.

In 1941 Winston Churchill made what we now know as the **V-for-Victory sign** famous, but he made no distinction between the forward and palm-back V sign until the latter part of the war, when someone must have explained he was telling the masses to, "piss off."



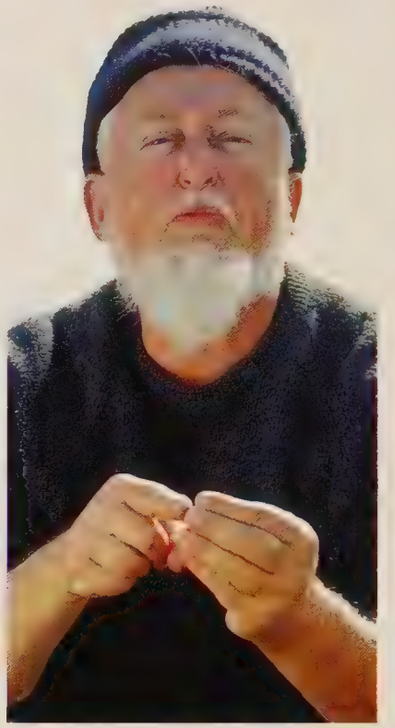
Unfortunately, British squares never learn their lessons. Margaret Thatcher made the same mistake in a 1980 post-election photo which told supporters where they could stuff their votes. This confusion was exploited by American anti-war protesters in the '60s, who used the palm-back V sign to secretly tell the police to fuck off without **buying themselves a one-way ticket on the Kent State Express.**



NOSE JERK

Gesture: Palm-inward V sign is brought up under the nose and the fingers are jerked around a few times.
Location: Arab countries.

This sign stands for sexual intercourse, or as we say in America, **doin' it**. The woman's upside-down legs are represented by the fingers, and the nose provides a very generous penis. Some think British sailors picked up this gesture in the 19th century and it corrupted into England's Palm-back V. Either way, this gesture is plainly the Arabian way of saying, "large in the nose, large in the hose." Whatever its genesis, this insult looks pretty nasty.



FIVE-FINGER TAP

Gesture: Touching the forefinger of the right hand to the bunched fingertips and thumb of the other hand.
Location: Saudi Arabia.

To Saudis, this says that your mother (the index finger of the first hand) is a whore and you have five fathers—one for each of the fingers on the second hand. While not genetically possible, this is still enough to make Arabian tempers flare.

MOUTZA "Go to Hell"

Gesture: Display of the open palm.
Location: Greece (also parts of North Africa).

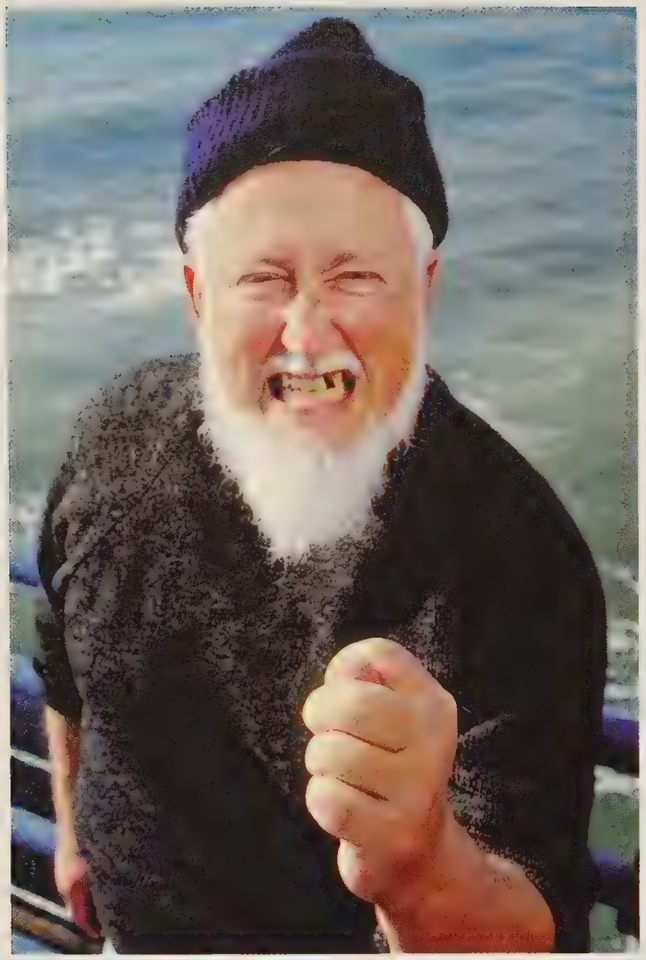
This open palm refers back to the ancient Byzantine practice where villagers would thrust shit in the faces of chained criminals paraded around town. In modern Greece, any outward hand motion is deemed extremely offensive. People go as far as waving good-bye inwardly toward themselves like a beauty pageant queen. An open palm thrust out in greeting can still cause havoc in small villages along the Aegean countryside, but those small-town folks generally dislike city-slicker poop-tossers, anyway.

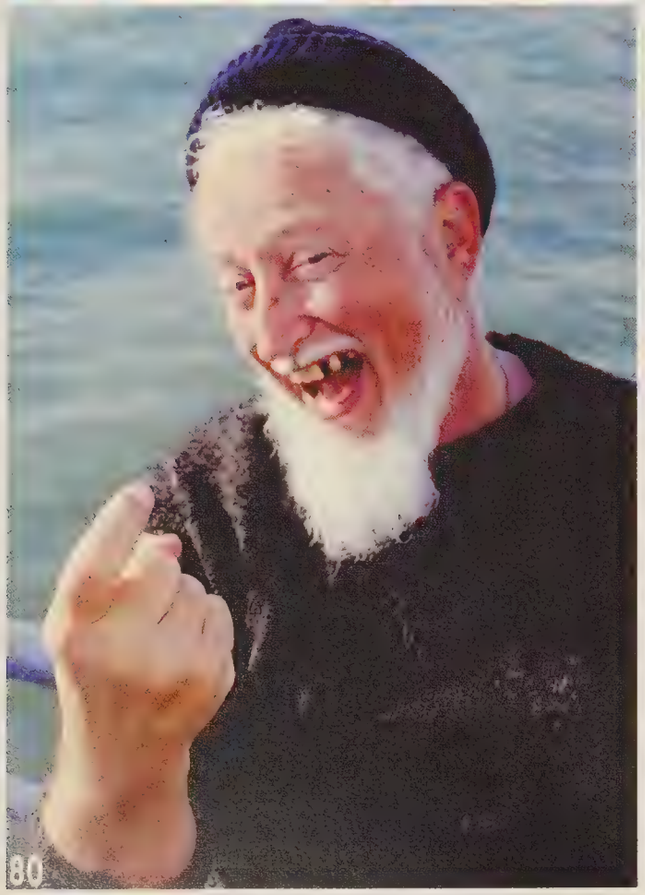
THUMBS UP

Gesture: Upthrusted thumb.
Location: Iran, Afghanistan, Nigeria and parts of Southern Italy, Israel and Greece.

Contrary to popular belief, the thumbs-up gesture did not spare a gladiator's life in Ancient Rome. A plebian's pointed thumb or *pollice verso* actually meant that the combatant was to be slain. A **HIDDEN** thumb, folded out of sight, or the *pollice compresso* meant he was to be spared. The famous scene in ***Spartacus*** (or any movie with gladiators), where the Emperor signals that a warrior's life should be spared by the upturned thumb, was flawed by mistranslation through the ages.

In much of the world today, the thumbs up means, "**O.K.,**" "**Right On!,**" or "**I like this movie, Gene.**" But in Iran, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Israel, and parts of Italy and Greece it is an obscene insult, especially when combined with a sweep of the arms. It roughly means, "**Sit on my phallus, asshole**," and carries the same stigma as the middle finger. In places such as southern Sardinia, where this gestures is noted for being particularly obscene, a hitchhiker would be well advised not to wave his thumb in the air or he may find himself in a ditch, his face stuffed with uncooked rigatoni.





FICA (or "the fig")

Gesture: The thumb is thrust through the middle and index fingers.
Location: Known throughout the world, but an insult in Greece, Turkey, and central France.

The fig is an ancient copulatory gesture simulating a penis poking through the labia. Called the fig because the thumblet is about the size and shape of said fruit, it's mainly used today as protection against the "evil eye" in the form of an amulet. However, in a few parts of the world, the fig is still considered a gross insult. How can a woman's genitals be construed as insulting? If the target is a man, being called a set of female genitals might be a little emasculating. But there's another, more colorful explanation, which harks back to 12th century Milan.

A *fig* in a 14th century Giotto fresco.

Holy Roman Emperor Fredrick Barbarosa was outraged when the rebellious city of Milan forced his wife, the Empress, to flee the city mounted backwards on a mule. The miffed Emperor retook the city and forced his captives to make a choice: Either pull a fig out of that same mule's ass with their mouths, or be hung in the marketplace. Thus, an angry fist with the thumb protruding from the fingers came to symbolize the humiliation of Milan. Interestingly, this form of insult is almost unknown today in Northern Italy, but mainly understood in Greece, Turkey, and oddly, central France where they apparently have an abundance of mules.

CROOKED FINGER

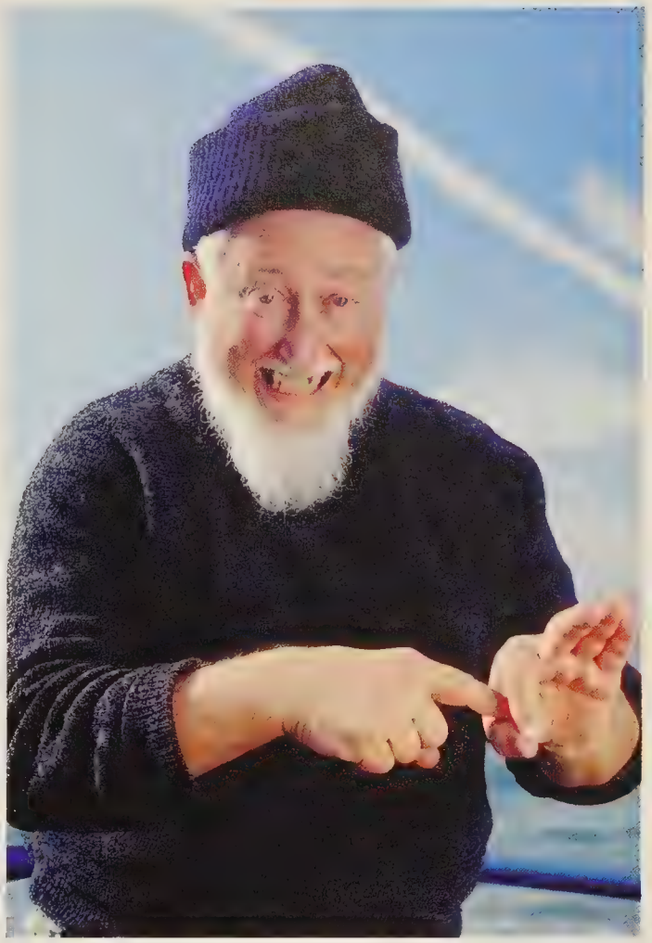
Gesture: The index finger crooks back and forth in a typical "come here" gesture.
Location: Japan, Indonesia, Australia.

Beckoning someone to "come here" with your index finger is ill-advised in Japan. The little upthrusting motion of the finger is considered a terribly obscene sexual come-on. In Indonesia and Australia the gesture is reserved to get the attention of a prostitute. Either way, you might get more than you bargained for.

PISTOLA

Gesture: The right index finger is placed through a left handed OK sign.
Location: Latin America.

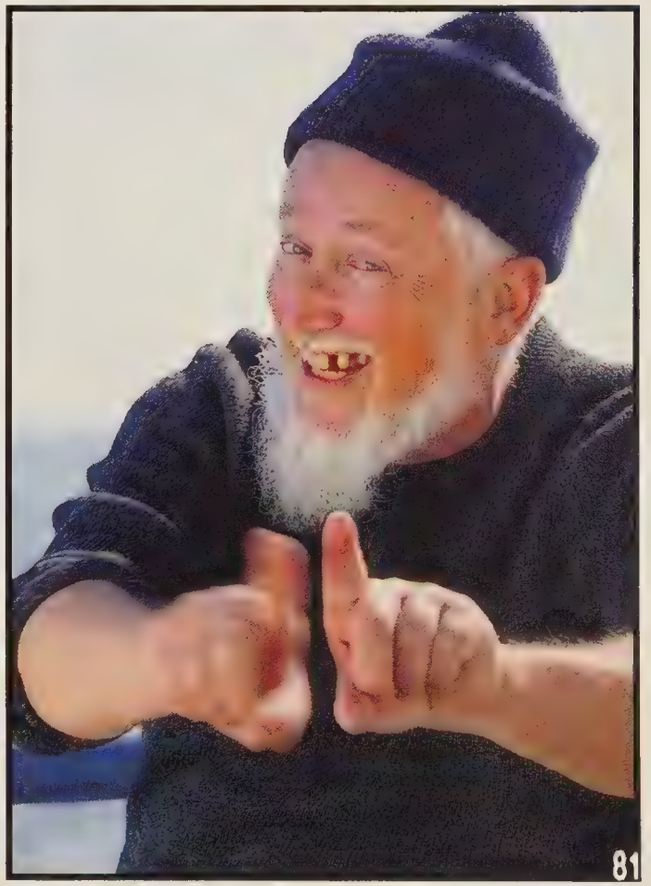
This gesture obviously signifies a sexual act—albeit a small male member in a cavernous female one. We use this gesture in America, but it is mainly used to illustrate furious intercourse and isn't really an insult.



THE CHINESE SINGLE PINKIE

Gesture: A raised single pinkie.
Location: China.

Chinese start counting with their thumbs as "one." To show a single pointed pinkie to someone means that they are five less than one, essentially worthless. Most Asian cultures don't have a hand gesture that carries the same baggage as the finger, but this will work in a pinch. You might expect more from the people who brought you the abacus.



THE NAUGHTY EGYPTIAN FINGER TAP

Gesture: Tapping two pointed index fingers side by side.
Location: Egypt.

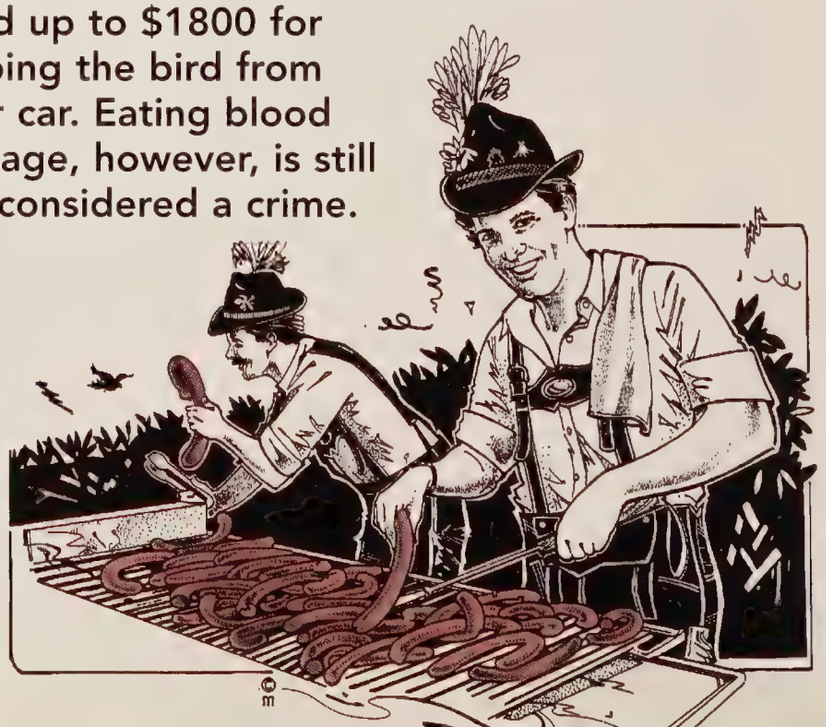
Tapping two fingers together at a passing woman roughly means, "*Would you sleep with me?*" and is considered very rude. Those Egyptians!

FOREARM JERK

Gesture: One hand slapped to the upper arm, and that arm raised with a fist.
Location: France, Southern Europe, the Mideast, and many other locations around the world.

In much of the world, this arm-sized phallic insult has replaced the more diminutive middle finger. In France, where the gesture may have originated, it is called the "*bras d' honneur,*" or the arm of honor, a funny moniker for a gross sexual insult. In Italy it is the "*va fan culo*" which sounds like "Banfangool!" to most Americans. The macho combination of a gigantic erect penis and a threatening fist says, "**Fuck off!**," or "**Up yours!**" As a bonus, the slapping of the hand against the opposing arm makes it seem as if the super-penis has gone so far up the recipient's receiving canal, it can't go any further. Although it's not necesarily a homosexual gesture, the violated canal is presumably anal —not vaginal, and no doubt NOT consensual. Not to be outdone by namby-pamby Europeans, Americans combine both gestures simultaneously, for a special double-dong attack.

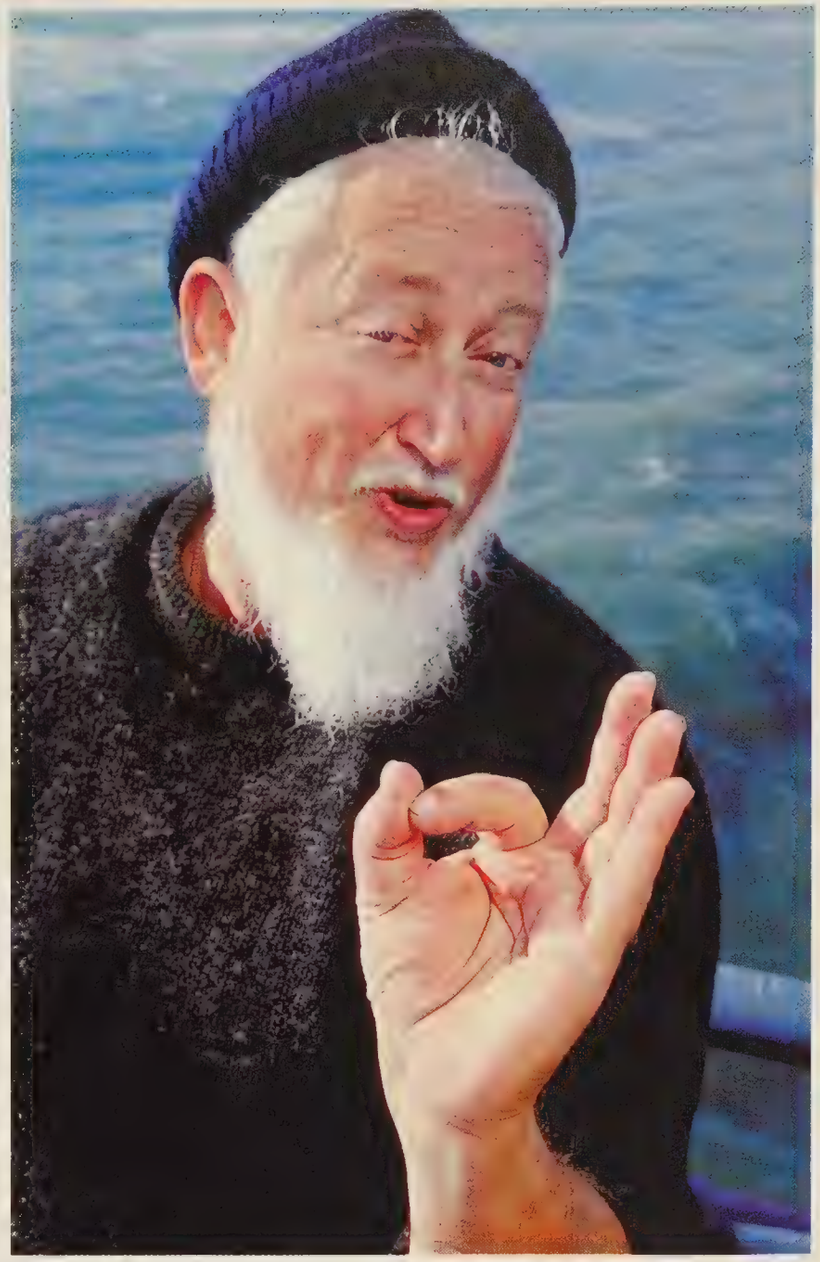
In Germany, you can be fined up to $1800 for flipping the bird from your car. Eating blood sausage, however, is still not considered a crime.



FINGER FACT:
According to legend, Frank Sinatra used to greet friends by walking up and asking, *"How's your bird?"* Inexplicably, he worked this phrase into his cover of Simon & Garfunkel's "Mrs. Robinson."

O.K. SIGN

Gesture: The thumb and forefinger connect in a standard O.K. sign.
Location: Tunisia, Turkey, South America.



Throughout much of Southern Europe, the O.K. sign has another meaning. The "O" appears to stand for "You are a zero," which doesn't seem like that much of an insult. However, in Tunisia, where this is performed with straightened fingers in a vigorous chopping motion, the combined gesture is much more threatening. It appears to mean, "You are such a zero, I should only kill you tomorrow if it fits into my schedule." Obviously, a simple gesture can save a busy Tunisian the ample time it takes to complete that sentence.

To Brazillians, the O.K. sign is seen as a woman's vagina—and considered an insult so dirty that it's actually censored from television broadcasts. If you flash your baggage handler at Sao Paulo Airport that everything's "O.K.," he'll think you're either swearing at him or that a slutty girl is behind his luggage cart.

In Turkey, the O.K. sign symbolizes another naughty portal, the anus, and can be used in a variety of circumstances. You could signal, "He is a boy-lover" behind some unlucky rug merchant's back. Or you can adopt a more invitational, "Take my ass, please!" which Turkish comics on the Anarkra mosque luncheon circuit used long before the birth of Henny Youngman.

This list is by no means a complete guide to insulting gestures worldwide. If you find yourself in a foreign land that we haven't covered, take the time to observe the local populace. Sooner or later, tempers will flare, gibberish will be exchanged, and someone will close the argument with a defiant gesture. Remember it. And use it well.

Tunisian "Less than Zero" variant

Finger Fun

HEY, KIDS!

We put these activities, games, and puzzles in here just for **YOU!** Say goodbye to boring, stuffy, pseudo-intellectual discourse, and say hello to **FINGER FUN!**

(Not suitable for children under 18 years of age)

```
QSDFESLKOAKSHITHEADFAA
RFASCREWYOUDSDEEWPOOPB
HIZFUCKOFFAWAALLEHOYOG
WSARACABITEMEYSSIMLAGM
HRAATAKETHISINYOURASSA
YUAAEATMEAADEFFUTSTEGT
AOTHATSMYUNDERWEARATAT
RYAARAASADRATERAAAAIAB
EPAPODUIASITONTHISAHAO
YUAAAAAFARTCONTINOUSLY
OAAMOTHERFUCKERSSABMUD
AAWHERETHESUNDONTSHINE
```

WORD SEARCH
Can you find 21 different meanings of THE FINGER?

CONNECT THE DOTS

Connect all the dots in the picture to the right and find out who's giving you the finger. I bet you'll never guess what Empire Builder wishes you'd screw off!

HINT:It's not Telly Savalas!

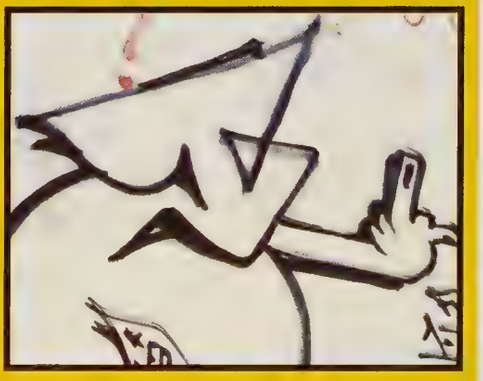
ANSWER: It's Genghis Khan, Mongolian terror of the steppes! Although not a native gesture, he may have encountered it as he burned Central Europe in the 13th century.

ILLUSTRATED NUMERICAL ENIGMA

In this puzzle the words are pictured instead of described. When the seven objects are rightly named, and placed one below another, the initial letters will spell the name of a finger that became famous more than a hundred years ago.

SPRAY PAINT UR SKOOL

Wanna paint the finger all over town? Just take a giant piece of cardboard and cut this design right into it. Now you've made a "stencil." Tape this stencil to a wall on your school. (The hole in the stencil is the part where the paint gets through.) Hold the spray paint can a foot away, and spray! Now you're cool—and a criminal!



REMEMBER: While you may call it art, making graffiti, especially on your school, is illegal. You may even get caught and sent to a special school for troubled youth where kids get high by sniffing burning ping-pong balls. The legally bound publishers of this book **DO NOT RECOMMEND** you do this.

MILK & CHEESE regularly appear in their very own comic book by Evan Dorkin. Here they show their love for readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Can You Draw *Bippy the Finger*?

***If you can, you could win a* $500 Art Scholarship!**

If you can draw **Bippy The Finger**, you may qualify to win a $500 scholarship to the ***Passaic School For The Arts*** in Oklahoma! At Passaic, you'll learn how to draw with real pens and pencils, from instructors who can't otherwise get jobs! After a few expensive classes, you'll be able to call yourself an **ARTIST**, with a capital **ART**! You'll even qualify to buy business cards that say ***ARTIST*** right on them! There are plenty of **OPPORTUNITIES** for artists who copy other artists' licensed characters, especially if you want to travel to Korea and work in a dimly lit room for pennies an hour! The world of animation awaits you, just as soon as you cut our school a big, fat check.

Finger Stickers

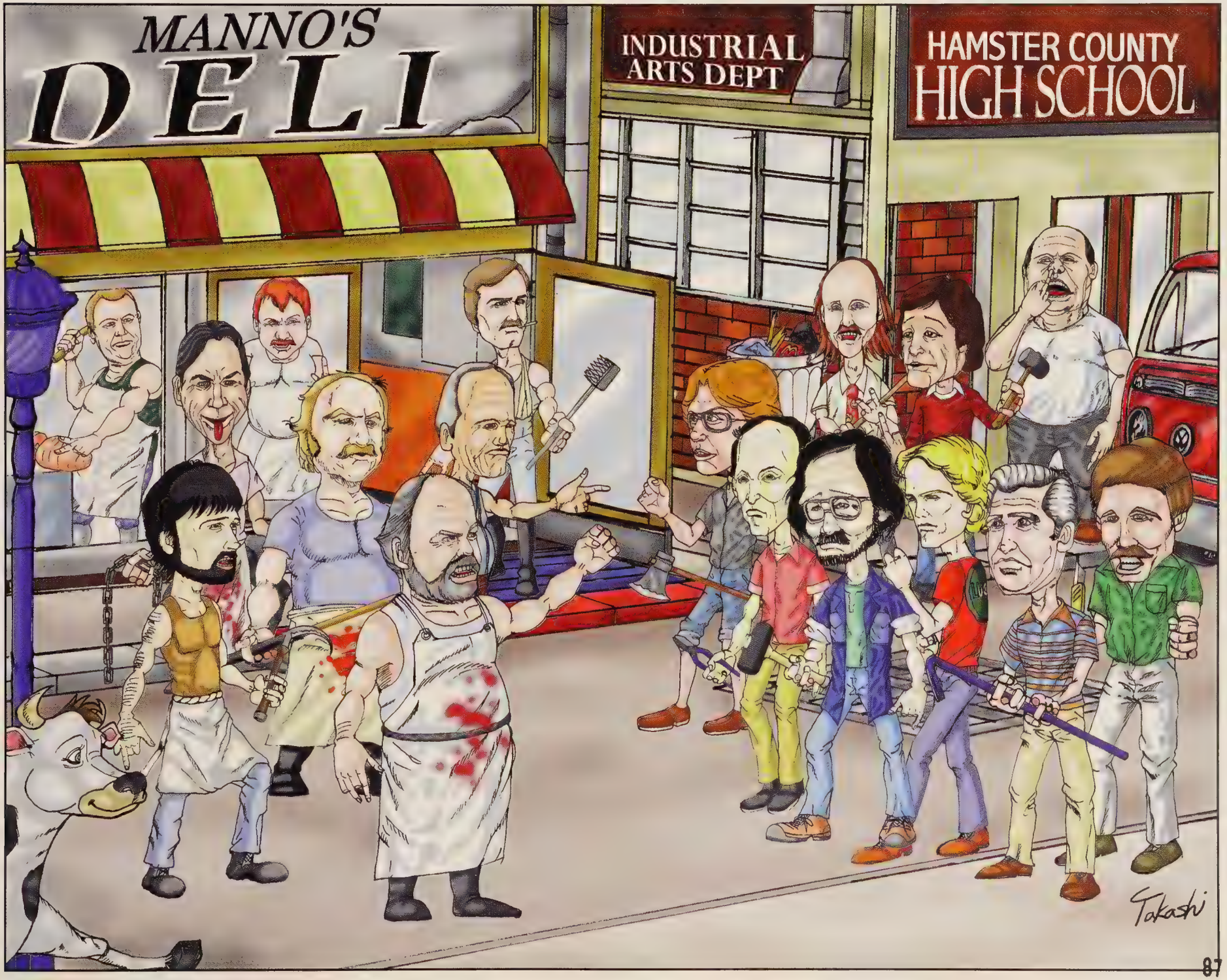
Put glue on the back and paste these everywhere! Don't worry about cutting up the book—you can always get your parents to buy you another one.

Finger Fact:

Fun, non-toxic, and delicious if you eat it, finger painting is a fun activity for children and morons of all ages!

Where's the Finger?

Butchers like meat. Shop teachers like wood. And both of them lose fingers like spare change in a dryer. But meat and wood go together like anal warts and Nancy Reagan. The heat is on in Hamster County. Can you spot the rabble rouser who sparked it all with the neighborhood's only functioning middle finger?



Test Your Trigger Finger

Answer the questions below. When you are done, total the number of A's, B's, C's, and D's and compare them to our handy answer key at the bottom of the next page.

Someone cuts you off in traffic, forcing you to almost hit a schoolbus. You:

A) Give them a friendly wave.
B) Honk! That'll show them.
C) Stick your arm out the window and vigorously wave your middle finger in their direction.
D) Force them off the road at dangerous speeds, then stop, and laugh.

You're at your 10 year high school reunion. You've had a bit to drink and are finally talking to the cute girl who sat behind you in trigonometry. A balding jock across the gym screams, "I'm talking to you, asswipe!" You:

A) Move closer so you can hear his commands more easily.
B) Ignore his rude remarks by turning your back and continuing the conversation.
C) Telegraph your reply by raising your upturned finger above the crowd.
D) Hit him over the head with a bottle of champagne and force him to play "bobbing for teeth" in the punch bowl.

Some jerk flips you the bird while you're shopping at the mall with your boyfriend. You:

A) Cheerily wave hello.
B) Flip them the bird.
C) Flip them both birds.
D) Introduce them to Flip Wilson.

You're pitching a lousy baseball game and the crowd of 24,000 booing fans isn't helping any. You:

A) Focus on the game, block the rowdy crowd out of your head, and do the best you can.
B) Signal to the catcher that you will hit the next batter in the nuts.
C) Create a special kind of **Fan Appreciation Day** with your middle finger as the prize.
D) Hijack the bullpen's relief pitcher car and drive it through the stands, crushing as many people as you can.

You're running for a political office and your opponent has just raised a dubious claim about your moral character: in particular, your penchant for livestock in lingerie. You:

A) Plead with your opponent to stick to the issues.
B) Vigorously deny any accusations and remind your opponent of his frequent cocaine parties for Haitian transsexuals.
C) Demonstrate that your finger is a mighty orator.
D) Demonstrate how your opponent takes it orally.

Driving through the desert, you notice a glowing, saucer-like object completely blocking the road. An alien being descends from the spaceship, its arms raised in universal greeting. You:

A) Drive as fast as you can in the other direction.
B) Greet these ambassadors from another world with open arms, and an open rectum.
C) Display your reluctance to join the Galactic Federation with a single-fingered vote.
D) Rip the alien's arms off and scream, *"Come and get me, E.T!"*

Alright! You're done! Now total the number of A's, B's, C's, and D's you've answered. Find the one with the highest number and consult the answer key below.

Majority of A's: You are a big pussy. Other people run your life. You get exactly what you deserve.

B's: Some problems require immediate, decisive action. However, your solutions are often complicated and unecessary. Don't overlook the simplicity of the finger. Practice it at home, or in the office, just to see how it feels. Keep a log of these experiences and share it with a friend.

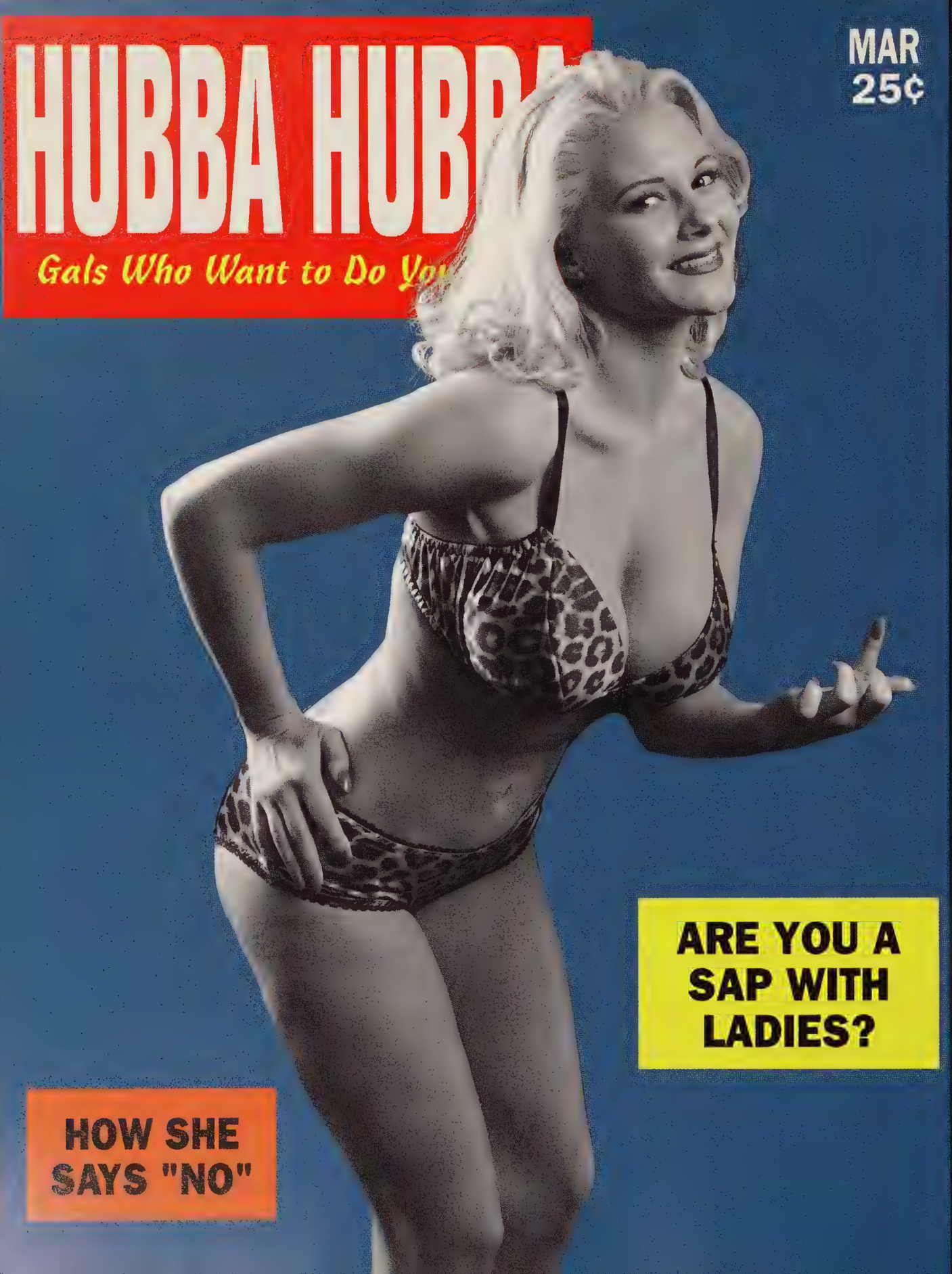
C's: You know that a great gift has been bestowed upon you—your middle finger—and you are not afraid of it. Clearly, this simple and effective tool cuts through any communication barrier. *The finger is your friend.*

D's: You are insane. This is not a bad thing, but you are probably better off running around naked, feeding on the raw liver of a gazelle you beat with a rock. Try putting your aggressive energy into community work, like helping disadvantaged children or throwing yourself off a tall building.

HUBBA HUBBA

Gals Who Want to Do Yo

MAR
25¢



ARE YOU A SAP WITH LADIES?

HOW SHE SAYS "NO"

HUBBA HUBBA

What Men Can't Have

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CLEAN UP YOUR ACT!

Men! Buy our finest beauty soap for that "clean" look women love. Lubricate your life with our stain-resistant formula! Also cures baldness and tooth decay.

GIRLS AS HOT AS THE MYSTERIOUS ATOM BOMB!

TOILET HUMOR

Dear Hubba-Hubba:
Back in the war, we used to have a term for the gals you like to picture in this magazine---- French. Personally, I can't stand snails.

-Col. Tom

Dear Sirs:
What is that thing all your models are doing with their hands? It looks like they are trying to put on an odd sort of puppet show, but I never see any children present. What gives?

-Confused

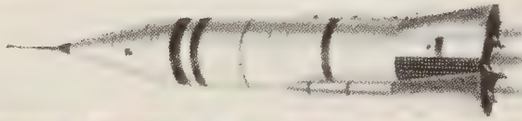
IF YOU THROW A BACHELOR PARTY... SOMETIMES YOU GET MORE THAN YOU ASKED FOR!

It's your last night of freedom, and the booze flows as freely as your libido. Excitement mounts as your buddies wheel out a special confection with your name all over it. Unfortunately, this sweet-meat has other ideas. Overworked, over-heated, and stuffed in a box for a half-hour, she's had it. Despite the cake in your face, you'd better believe she'll still get a big tip.

Finger 3000

Older than Jesus, the finger has maintained its suggestive power despite the rise and fall of civilizations. But will a digital age, more dominated by silicon chips than flesh, mark its eventual demise? Specifically, will a man about town in the **Year 3000** still use the finger to insult the chick in rocket boots who cuts off his Levitron machine? Or would that be considered hopelessly *passe*?

We currently have the technology to build a stronger, faster middle finger costing significantly less than Six Million Dollars. Already thousands of people each year inject collagen into their lips, making them appear swollen and distorted. Will this simple form of plastic surgery bridge the gap between wealthy socialites and your Average Joe Blow? Picture a **New York City cabdriver hoisting a beefy, customized, foot-long collagen-enhanced finger into the polluted air**. You'd yield to him in a Staten Island minute!



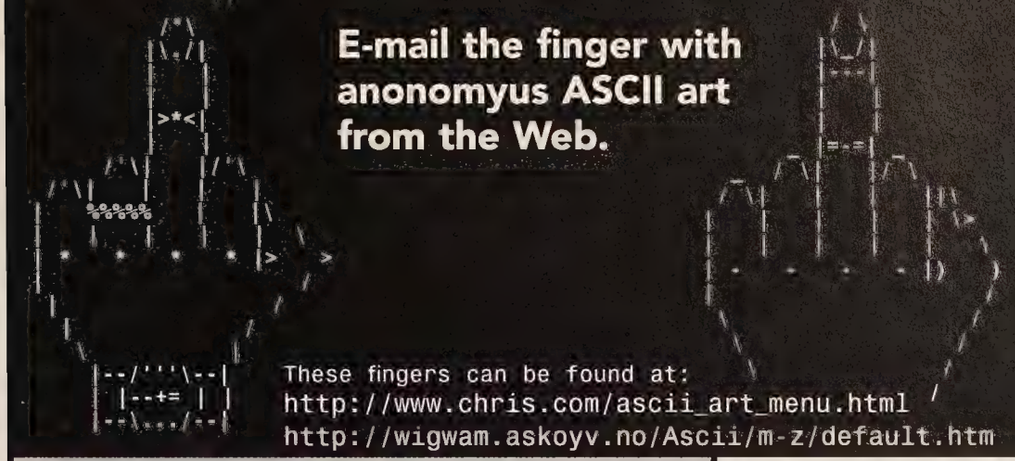
One day, a mad genius will tire of his identical sheep collection and clone humans. You will be able to go to an "organ farm" to grow a new heart, pancreas, or simply your own middle finger. Nothing says "*I can penetrate you 20 times over*" better than 20 middle fingers on the same hand. When this trend takes off, we predict a sharp rise in the costs of glove-making.

Cyborgs of the near future will wield a middle digit that is half flesh, half machine, and more powerful than a Japanese bullet train. Conditioned to live in the harsh atmosphere of an alien planet, these emissaries to the stars will be prepared to meet any extraterrestrial threat—with their fingers.

We predict you will be able to go to your doctor and have microscopic machines, or nanomachines, injected into your bloodstream. These tiny robots will have the power to rearrange the very building blocks of life itself. With an electrical signal from your brain, these little contractors will create new body parts at an atomic level. What could you do with such powers? During a heated argument, shock your opponent by transforming your middle finger into a literal penis which spews artificial ejaculate all over him. Touché!

Of course, with technology comes some uncertainty. Unanswered questions plague these new advances like sweat on a bald man's scalp. Will we all become victims of Big Brother's sub-orbital satellite finger control system? Will we be destroyed by a giant cyber-finger that shuts down global banking? Will the finger learn to talk, overthrow humans, and laugh incredulously when Charlton Heston says he's from another planet?

E-mail the finger with anonomyus ASCII art from the Web.



These fingers can be found at:
http://www.chris.com/ascii_art_menu.html
http://wigwam.askoyv.no/Ascii/m-z/default.htm

3000

The finger lives on because it is bold, brash, and simple enough for any citizen to understand. The global proliferation of American culture through movies, satellite TV, and even the internet only strengthens its worldwide recognition. However, like languages, gestures may eventually develop new meanings and nuances, mutating into something different. What if the bird becomes so common, it goes mainstream? The finger's very ubiquity could eliminate its power. Imagine kids wearing t-shirts reading, "**My Grandmother Went to Bermuda and All I Got Was the Finger!**," or "**I (finger) New York!**" Suddenly, the finger would no longer mean **"fuck off,"** but "Gee, that's *rough*,", or simply, **"Howdy, fella!"**

Don't laugh—it could happen. Sex used to be dirty; now everybody's doing it. But should this unfortunate course of events transpire, we here at **THE FINGER** stand to make an extra dollar. So go ahead and give the finger to everyone you see! Let's adopt it as our national greeting! Isn't exploitation what this great nation is all about?

Regardless of where the future leads, it's likely that millions of years from now, when the sun is a red and bloated giant about to engulf the dying Earth, the last descendant of mankind will raise a glistening pseudopod in a final and glorious salute to the universe.

Our Psychic Friend Says...

Since we can't **REALLY** predict what will happen to the finger in the future, we asked someone who can—Beverly Hills psychic and vedic astrologer, **George Roman**, profiled in the book, *The 100 Top Psychics in America* (Pocket Books). George agreed to gaze into his cards and the stars to answer what is truly a question of utmost importance:

What will become of the offensive middle finger?

Non-verbal communication is more powerful than the spoken word. Gestures like the middle finger will be around for a long time to come. However, with our increasing cultural diversity it is very likely that it may lose its full meaning. People always need a way to vent their frustrations at others. The finger will survive a lot longer than the people flipping it.

Our world is heading into a time of massive change and upheaval, both politically and environmentally. As people assert their opinions and free speech more openly, the finger will be right there to express their views.

If only the rest of future was always so clear!

Feel free to contact George with burning questions of your own at **www.loveguru.com**.

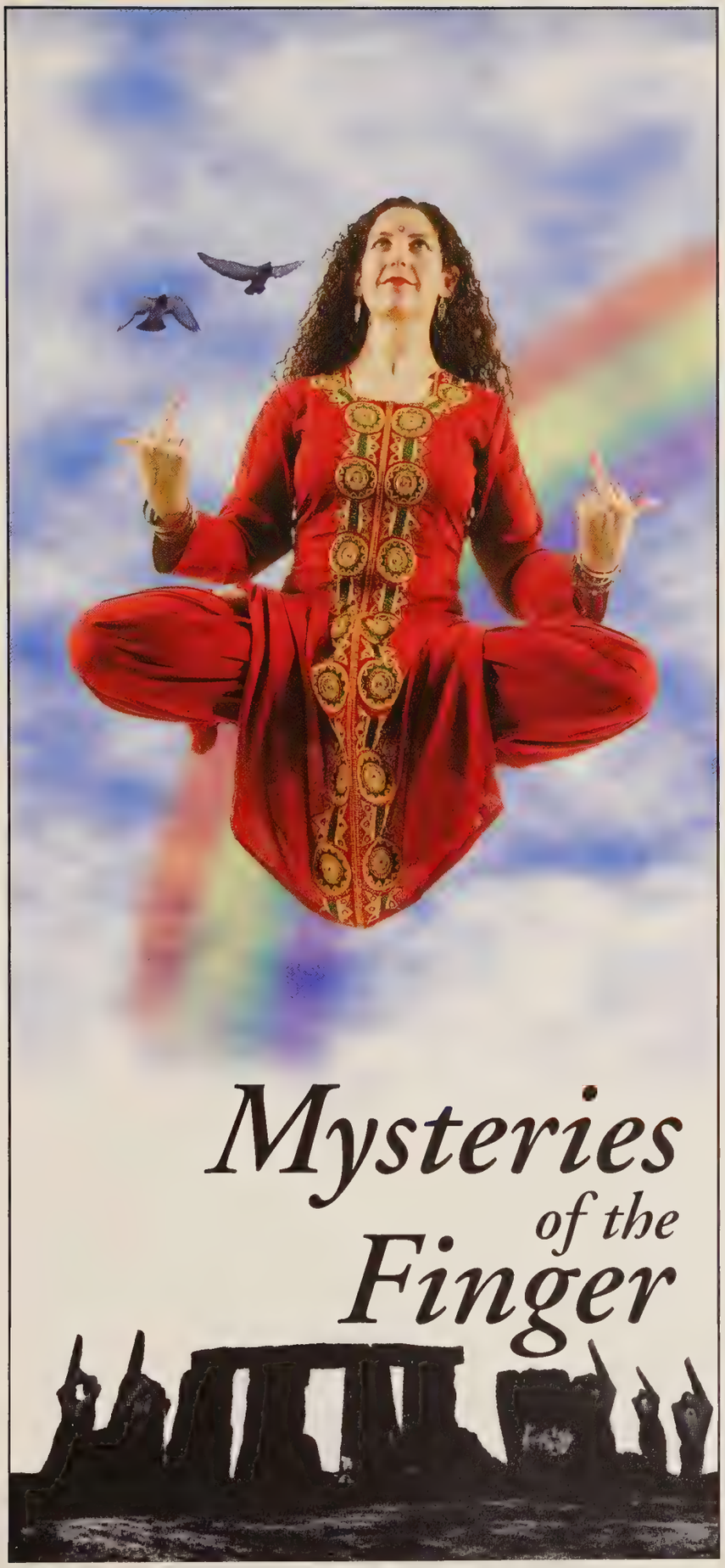
Other Finger Futures:

The future is an endless vista of possibility. What will happen 10, 20—100 years from now? Nobody knows for sure, but we can guess.

Man encounters an alien species that has a squat body and elongated neck topped with a miniscule head. The finger comes to mean, **"Alien freak!"** and is suppressed by a special interest group calling the gesture "*specist.*" This group is later vaporized by the aliens—staunch Republicans who would rather die than receive any form of special treatment.

A yakuza-like Mafia clan takes over the government of mainland China. The government adopts the group's ancient practice of chopping off the fingers of disloyal gang members nationwide. Flashing someone the central digit comes to mean, ***"I did no wrong!," "I am no peasant,"*** or, ***"Please don't shoot me, I'm not from China!"***

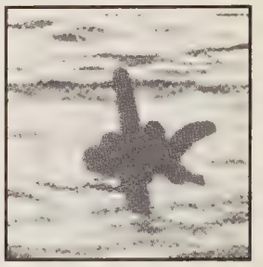
A computerized, mouse-driven culture adopts the display of the middle finger to mean, ***"Look! I can hold a single finger aloft and feel no pain due to nagging carpal tunnel syndrome, nerd!"*** In a futuristic society this would still amount to **"Fuck you."**



Mysteries of the Finger

Historians have proven THE FINGER was popularized by the Greeks over 2000 years ago—but recent evidence suggests it may be far more ancient and ***mysterious***. Archeologists were shocked to discover a megalith just north of Stonehenge featuring a series of middle finger-like rocks. Coincidence? Or were these dark druids leaving a granite **Fuck You** for future generations?

In the 19th century, French troops in the Sahara Desert uncovered a ***mysterious*** obelisk that resembles a towering middle finger. An answer to the riddle of the Sphinx? Maybe—but most unlikely.



In 1943, a student photographed a ***mysterious*** "sea-serpent" in Lake George, New York. Dubbed "George" by locals, this monster never aroused worldwide interest due to its offensive appearance. A freak of evolution, or tasteless hoax? Perhaps—or perhaps not. But certainly neither.

Mexico City, 1991. Millions witness a ***mysterious*** object zipping through the sky at incredible speeds. A secret government plot to get millions of Mexicans to look into the sky, or an alien vessel? Scientists say, conceivably, the finger was brought from another world and genetically imprinted in our DNA. Some say this is implausible—possibly, but unproven.

The finger is ***mysterious***. Within its tightly clenched grasp, this gesture may hold the key to understanding who and what we are—and what we will become!

FINGER MANIFESTO

UGLY. Mean. Base. Vulgar. Obscene. Tasteless. Offensive. Subhuman. Retarded. Dirty. Sleazy. Impolite. Portentous of doom. VINDICTIVE. Malaproprious. Vengeful. Scandalous. A glaring example of humanity's shortcomings. Evil. Ungrateful. THREATENING. Curmudgeonly. Resentful. Negative. Inconsiderate. Controversial. Bad. Naughty. Showing a lack of restraint. A DETRIMENT TO SOCIETY. Filled with bad intent. Malicious. Satanic. ARCHAIC. Anarchic. Lacking a certain *panache*. Futile. Cowardly. Misanthropic. In-your-face. Impudent. Inappropriate in mixed company. Only for those who lack the ability to express themselves in a clear verbal manner. TERRIFYINGLY 3-D.

THE FINGER IS ANGRY

White people do it. Black people do it. Asians do it. Italians do it frequently. Senior citizens won't admit they do it, but they do. For over two thousand years the Middle Finger has fought a pitched battle against those who would demand you conform to their five fingered world of polite, open-handed, beauty-queen waves—never expressing any discontent, any anger, or anything you might have to say.

THE FINGER IS NOT HAPPY WITH YOU

The Middle Finger is the strength of any hand. The true worker of any hand. It is the one which constantly opens and closes for the synchronous benefit of its brother Fingers. The one that curls with optimism and hope around any task which betters life for the entire organism. Do you really think we could get by with just thumbs? Do you actually believe you're above your own Fingers? Clearly the Middle Finger is the superior Finger, because it's longer, it's stronger, and it deserves distinction.

THE FINGER IS POINTING AT YOU

Want to climb the ladder of corporate America? Let your Finger languish in your palm. Want to climb the ladder of freedom? Let your Finger do the talking.

The Finger demands your attention

Want to sublimate the masses? Become a man of letters, politics, and power. Want to incite a riot? Give a crowd the Finger.

The Finger does not ask for your forgiveness

Want to hide how you feel? Mask yourself in obscure meanings, arcane expressions, and cliches. Want people to know how you feel? Smash their comfortable illusions by unleashing your three-knuckled, flesh and bone, second-Finger-from-the-thumb attack directly upon their unsuspecting eyes.

The Finger is the revolution

The Finger will be televised—but it'll crack the camera lens.Do not imagine for a moment that the Finger will allow itself to be co-opted. It is no mere catch-phrase to be researched, quantified and cataloged for commercial use. It is a threat, a mantra, a way of being that comes from the base of the hypothalamus directly to the last digit of your thrusting destiny.

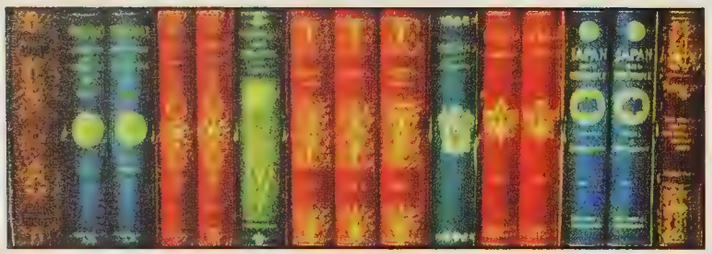
The Finger will not take questions, now or at a later date

Give yourself the Finger. Feel the anger bubbling under the your face? Is it red? Are you eyes bulging out of your head? The Finger is about equality—equal contempt for all who attempt to capture the spirit and freedom of the Finger with their greedy gaze. Now you are ready to perform the Finger's will.

The Finger belongs to everyone

Do not allow yourself to be part of this sanctimony anymore. Raise yourself above prejudice and contempt. Open your mind and unfurl your center digit against adversity, censorship, and ignorance—words which are truly "ugly" and "mean." The Finger is not the problem—the Finger is the solution.

Salvation is at the tip of your FINGER!



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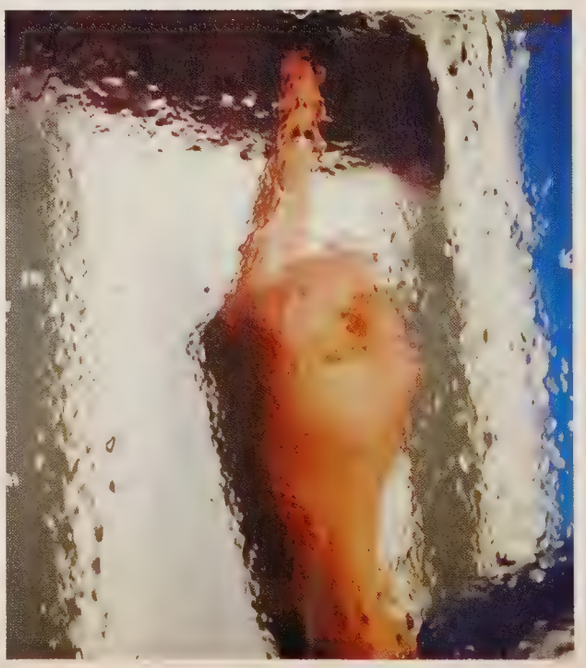

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E-mail some low high-tech art–or just admire it.

ESPN Sportszone
http://espn.sportszone.com
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Gestures: The Do's and Taboo's of Body Language Around the World
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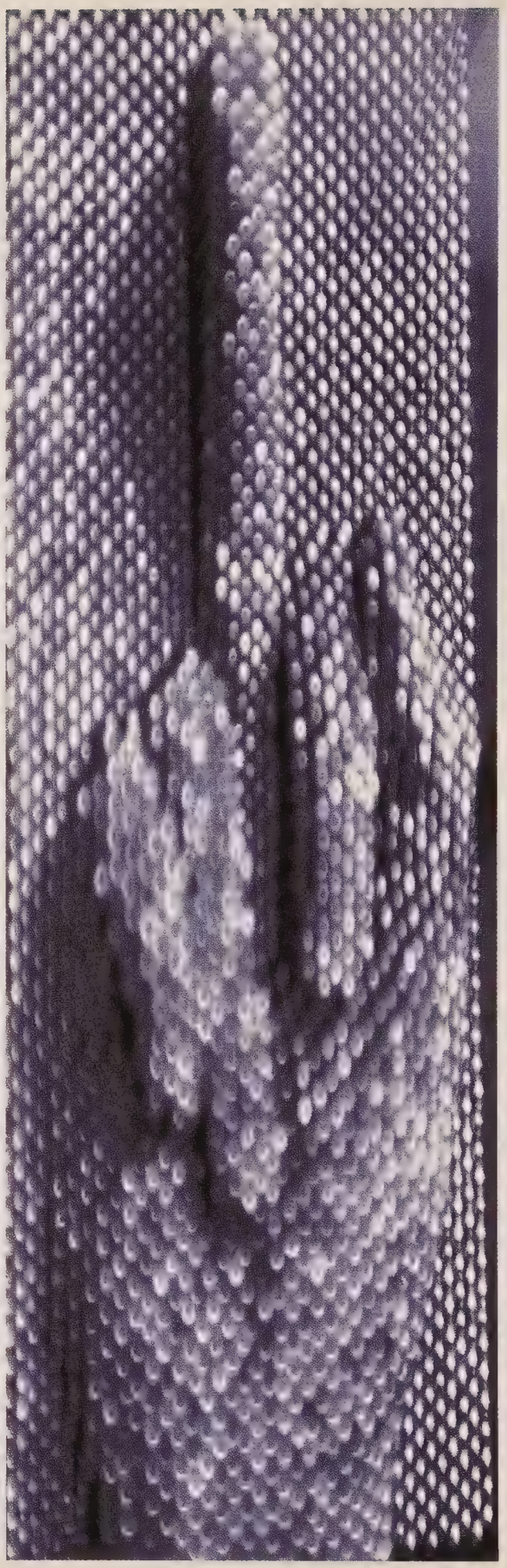

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